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JOURNALS AND REPORTS

RECEIVED FROM

CAPTAIN THE HON. G. C. NAPIER,
BENGAL STAFF CORPS,

ON

108845

SPECIAL DUTY IN PERSIA.

1874.

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1876.

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PREFACE.

On the 7th February 1874, Mr. Taylour Thomson, Her Majesty's Minister at Teheran reported that a successful raid had been made by the Persian Governor of Khaff on Herat territory, and he proposed that a native agent should be sent from Meshed, in conjunction with an agent of the Persian Government to ascertain on the spot the true state of the case, with a view to obtain restitution of the plunder, if proved to be Afghan property. Upon the suggestion of the Government of India it was eventually decided to employ a European Officer instead of a Native Agent, and Captain the Hon. G. Napier, of the Bengal Staff Corps was ordered by that Government to proceed to Teheran and report himself to Her Majesty's Minister at that Court for special duty. That duty was primarily to report upon the circumstances of the raid made upon Herat from Khaff, but he was also instructed to embrace the opportunity of his journey to Khaff to obtain all available information on the present condition of the Persian frontier; the feelings between the Persians and Afghans on either side of the border; the condition of the Turkoman tribes; the effect of the late arbitration in regard to the Seistan boundary; and on similar matters of interest.

Captain Napier arrived at Teheran on the 4th June 1874, and started for Meshed on the 3rd July. He reached that place on the 10th August, commenced his return journey viâ Asterabad, on the 21st October (having spent a portion of the intervening time in a visit to Kelat, a district in the mountains north of Meshed), and arrived once more at Teheran on the 21st December 1874. The journals and reports which follow, are those submitted from time to time by Captain Napier to the Government of India, narrating the various points of information which he acquired on his journey.

Political and Secret Department.
India Office.
1st January 1876.

JOURNALS AND REPORTS.

No. 1.

Report of Proceedings in regard to the Khaff Raid.

No. 11, dated Meshed, 19th August 1874.

From—Captain the Hon. G. C. Napier, on special duty in Persia, to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter which I have addressed to His Excellency W. T. Thomson, Her Majesty's Minister, Teheran, giving such information regarding the Khaff raid as I have been able to obtain.

It will be seen from the enclosure that the Persian authorities have a very decided objection to any close inquiry into the circumstances of the raid. I have, therefore, for reasons noted in the inclosure, deferred the prosecution of my journey to Khaff, pending receipt of further instructions from Mr. Thomson.

The main objection raised by His Excellency the Governor-General of Khorassan to my visit to Khaff was, that it was unadvisable to press inquiry into a matter which had been for some months settled to the satisfaction of both parties. This objection has weight only in so far as it is true that the parties are really satisfied and not merely silent or quiescent until such time as opportunity may offer for retaliation or prosecution by other means of dormant claims, and I have as yet heard no evidence of such satisfaction.

The Afghans appear to have got back only a moiety of the property plundered from them, and though the Ruler of Herat may be satisfied or may make no further complaint, the owners of the property will not share in that satisfaction and will certainly only await a fair opportunity for righting themselves.

The Persian authorities allege that the raid by their people was made in retaliation of a previous Afghan raid, of which however I have as yet been able to obtain no independent proof. It is said that a body of 900 Turkomans and Afghans carried off a number of sheep from the Khaff plain. In the present or rather the normal condition of the border, according to Persian accounts, such a raid would be a very probable occurrence, and it would go so far to justify a retaliation that one is at a loss to understand the extreme anxiety of the authorities on the border to prevent inquiry. A reprisal made under such circumstances would hardly call for more than explanation; but the Persian authorities have not only failed to furnish me with full information and opposed my prosecuting the inquiry on the spot, they have also taken

measures to prevent my obtaining information during my stay here, forbidding my door to all not furnished with an express permission.

The determination to cloak inquiry which dictates these measures appears to me to give the lie to the justification or explanation of the raid given. It may be that the habitual jealousy of the Persian Government regarding any interference with their border politics, which was evidenced so clearly by the action of the Persian Commissioner and officials connected with the Seistan Mission, is the motive, and it is also possible that the raid from Khaff was not directly provoked as alleged, but was simply a plundering expedition of the Persian borderers and Hazara guards, or the raid may have been, as I have heard, actually directed by the chief authority in Khorassan, who was a participator in the gains. Under present circumstances it is difficult for me to do more than speculate, but I am inclined to believe that the raid was a mere plundering expedition, and perhaps sanctioned. The name of Mullah Yoosuf Hazara, the most noted plunderer on this border, which I find mentioned in connection with the raid both in your Cabul news-letter and by common report here, is almost sufficient to put that stamp upon it.

Though I do not apprehend that the matter is of very great importance, I shall endeavour to arrive at the true facts.

In the inclosure I have attempted to show, as far as my information admits, the present state of this portion of the Persian border. It is exposed, as I have said, for some hundreds of miles to the predatory incursions of an active and determined enemy. The Persian Government, with much difficulty and at great cost maintain a far advanced post at Sarraks, which was formerly settled and made a base for their operations by this enemy. Deprived of this base, only a short line of Persian territory, which might have been guarded, would have been exposed to their ravages, so long as they failed to find free passage and assistance through the neighbouring state of Herat, and their forays even into this portion must have been made from so great a distance as very materially to increase the difficulties.

It would appear, therefore, that the Persians have just cause of complaint against the Afghan Government. Apart from the allegations of actual assistance rendered in men and supplies, which rest entirely on Persian evidence, there can be no doubt that free passage is permitted to the Turkoman raiders through Afghan territory, and might, to some extent, be effectually denied them. It would not probably be possible always, or even often, to prevent parties crossing the border, but timely information would save many a house from pillage and many hundreds of helpless villagers from a life-time of slavery. That both the ruler of Herat and his subjects should be lukewarm in such a cause is not surprising. The former is either in alliance with the Chiefs of the Turkoman tribes, or looks to them for assistance in his troubles, which have long been impending; the latter,

though sometimes suffering at the hands of the Turkomans, have no spark of compassion for the Shiah heretics.

Under present conditions and present government in Afghanistan, it is, therefore, manifestly hopeless for the Persians to look for cordial assistance from their neighbours; their defence must rest in their own hands, and it may be expected that they will occasionally become the assailants, as they have in this affair of Khaff.

The other portions of the Persian border most exposed to the Turkoman ravages are the districts of Astrabad, Shahrood-Bostam, and a portion of Subzwar.

The northern frontier line east of Astrabad is defended by the border state of Kelat-i-Nadiri, an impassable natural barrier, and further west by the Koordish tribes, a brave and warlike population, able to meet the Turkomans quite on equal terms.

The district of Astrabad is open at all points, but of its present state and relations with the Turkomans, I have no reliable information.

The districts of Subzwar and Shahrood-Bostam, though separated from the Turkomans by the main chain of Alburz, have suffered, up to recent times, more perhaps than any other part of the border.

The Alburz, though rising to a considerable height, have always an easy slope, and present little difficulty to the active Turkoman horsemen. Small parties can pass anywhere, and larger bodies have the choice of several good passes, which the weakness of the Persian local governments and the indifference, if not worse, of the border chiefs leave habitually unguarded.

The pass behind Jah Jarm is the one usually selected by the Allamans or large plundering parties; clearing the pass, they enter an open plain from which they can sweep westward on to the fertile villages of Shahrood-Bostam, eastward into the Jouven Valley, and southward into the main caravan route to Meshed. This road passes from Mayamay as far as Mazenan, a distance of 70 miles, through low ranges of hills of such easy slope as to offer no obstacle to the movements of horsemen and yet affording the most perfect cover.

For the past six months, the whole of these last-named districts have enjoyed an unprecedented freedom from attacks. Except in very small numbers, and at rare intervals, the Turkomans have not been seen.

This is attributed by the people of the border to the Russian occupation of Oorgunge, by which the last and principal slave market has been closed, and which has given full occupation to the most predatory of the Turkoman tribes, in preparing for their own defence. Though particularly favoured in this respect, during the last six months, there is no doubt that there has been a gradual, though marked, improvement during the last 20 years.

Many villages that I visited in the remoter parts of the Shahrood district, formerly subject to constant visitations, had now forgotten all but the name of Turkoman. In the Jouven

Valley, which is comparatively near to the Turkoman *obahs*, they have not been seen for seven or eight years, and the frontier *belooks* or divisions of Subzwar have been entirely free from danger for the last 20 years.

This improved state of affairs is evidenced by the ruins of many towers of refuge dotted over the fertile plains, and by the decreased attention paid to the repair of village walls and enclosures.

The Persian Government cannot, I think, lay claim to much credit on this score; the improvement appears due rather to the decreased means of offence of the Turkomans than to any better system of border defence, or to any increased influence over the tribes. Its relations with the Turkomans can never, owing to difference of religion and traditional race prejudice, be really friendly.

A small portion of them are unwilling subjects, a larger number, when it suits them, profess a nominal allegiance, but the great body are inveterate enemies, and could under no conceivable circumstances be brought to ally themselves permanently with, or to submit to, the Persian Government.

The Chief or Khalifa of the Sarraks tribe sent messengers to the Governor-General of Khorassan last year proffering allegiance, but they were at the time suspected to be spies, and nothing has come of it.

The Tekkes of Merve, though living under an impending cloud of Russian invasion, have made, so far as is known here, no advances; and the predatory incursions of this and other tribes continue as frequent as their own circumstances admit.

The Tekkes, under a chief named Kousheed Khan, have, since the submission of their suzerain to Russian authority, concentrated at Merve, and are making vigorous preparations for the defence of that place. They have constructed a large fortified camp for the protection of their families and are said to be constantly employed in strengthening the defences, the chief feature of which is a large wet-ditch of great depth, backed by a thick rampart formed of the *déblai*.

The capture of such a work, if sufficient labour is expended on it, must prove a far more serious undertaking than the reduction of a town defended, as the towns of Central Asia usually are, by a thin mud wall and bastions. For the defence of these works they have 27 guns, taken from the Persian army under the Hashmut-ul-Mulk in 1857.

They have also a body of 3,000 or 4,000 foot soldiers, well-armed, a proportion of them with European rifles, and said by the Persian officers of the Sarraks garrison, who have some experience of them, to be excellent shots and very formidable antagonists hand-to-hand.

The force of cavalry that might be collected at Merve to resist an invasion can hardly be estimated, but there would certainly be sufficient both to aid in the defence of Merve and to cover the whole line of the enemies' communication with the Oxus or Caspian.

Though preparing so vigorously for defence, much doubt is entertained as to their resolution, and a prolonged struggle is considered impossible.

They have but the one stronghold of Merve; beaten out of that, they have no point on which they could rally. They are encumbered with their families and their cattle, which constitutes their whole wealth. They are unaccustomed to any mode of fighting but their own. Though brave individually, they have been for centuries in the habit rather of avoiding than of meeting attacks. Even in their forays for plunder it is admitted that they never attack superior numbers, never attack twice, and never meet the resolute attack of an enemy.

They have seen also all the states of Central Asia submit in turn, and they have before them the example of the Yemoots; a tribe nearly as powerful, who have submitted at the price only of a nominal tribute. There are, therefore, good grounds to doubt that, unsupported, the tribe would make any severe struggle for independence.

Their chief, Kousheed Khan, is reported to have said that they would fight once and fight hard, and then accept whatever was their fate. When the time comes, their determination may be still further shaken, for they are, it would appear from this, not far from half-beaten.

With assistance the position would be altered, and they appear willing to look for it anywhere but in Persia. In March 1873 they made overtures to the Afghan Government, asking for an asylum for their families to enable them the better to resist an attack which the Russians had threatened to make on their settlements when the crops were ripe. The reply of the Ameer is not known, but the families remain at Merve, and the threatened attack has not been made.

I should mention in case the report has not already reached you, that these Turkomans of Merve have in their hands a Russian prisoner, said by some to be an officer of the rank of Colonel, and by others to be a merchant. He was captured eight months ago with a caravan taking commissariat supplies to the Russian troops on the Oxus.

A Persian officer from Sarraks informed me that he had received a letter from him written in good French, from which it would seem that he is an educated man.

The Russian authorities on the Oxus are said to have refused to ransom him, accompanying the refusal with a very significant threat. If really an officer of the rank stated, it is almost inconceivable that he should have been left by his countrymen so long imprisoned and subjected to the grossest indignities.

An attempt was made, the Governor-General informed me, by the Persian Government to ransom him, but the price demanded was too much.

Regarding the Yemoot tribe, I heard on the road a piece of information which, if confirmed, is, I apprehend, of much importance. The Russian Governor (Colonel Lomakyn) of the

Trans-Caspian territory, to whom the Yemoots have submitted, has lately made a claim to tax the Yemoot settlers or *Chamoors* as well as the *Charwars* or nomadic portion of the tribe. The latter, having their camps along the shore of the Caspian, naturally fall under Russian influence, but the former have been for many years connected with the Persian Government and cultivate lands on both banks of the Attrek for about 50 miles up its course. This claim, though resisted by the Governor of Astrabad, to whom these settlers paid tribute, has been, it is said, admitted by the Persian Government. Though the loss of such subjects may be rather a subject of congratulation, the concession gives Russia a *pied-à-terre* south of the Attrek or, in fact, command of that river for 50 miles of its course.

I find in an extract from the Moscow Gazette that 70 elders of the Yemoot or Yomud tribe met Colonel Lomakyn at Teheran on the 25th March last; and it is probable that arrangements entered into then led to the claim I have heard mentioned.

By latest accounts from Herat giving news up to the 16th August, Sirdar Yakoob Khan is still employed in preparation for the defence of Herat, repairing and deepening the ditch and provisioning the town and enlisting men secretly.

It is, however, said that he is prepared to submit to his father, but not at discretion. He has received assistance in money from some of his adherents, and the Heratees promise their support. The carriage collected, about 700 camels, would not suffice to move a force. It is probable, therefore, that his resistance will be confined to a defence of the town and citadel, in the hope of obtaining better terms than by submission. Beyond Herat I cannot hear that he is likely to find much support.

The Governor of Balkh is said to be staunch to the Ameer.

Of the Turkomans, the most powerful tribe, the Tekkes, are fully engaged in watching the Russians on the Oxus. One of their chiefs, Taj Khan, who has a large disposable body of freebooters of different tribes, is said to be on very intimate terms with the Sirdar, and also to be retained by the Ameer whom he will not desert.

Tahir Khan, a Chief of the Sārăk tribe, is named as a supporter of the Sirdar, and could bring some thousands of good cavalry into the field.

The Jamsheedees, whose chief, Khan Aga, has a daughter married to the Sirdar, and is hence interested in his maintenance at Herat, can dispose of about four thousand men.

Money would bring a few thousand more of the same sort of troops, but there is, so far as is known here, nothing like a strong combination against the Ameer's Government.

Abdul Jalil Khan, Governor of Kohsan, General Faqir Ahmed Khan, Shahghassee Atta Oolla, Mahomed Hassan Khan.

The Sirdar's emissary, Abdul Zahid Khan, has, it is reported, returned to Herat, with the Ameer's ultimatum, demanding the immediate surrender of certain of the Sirdar's partisans, whose names I give (margin), though you will probably have learnt them from Cabul.

No. 10, dated Meshed, 18th August 1874.

From Captain the Hon. G. C. NAPIER, on special duty in Persia, to His Excellency W. T. THOMSON, Her Majesty's Minister, Teheran.

I HAVE the honor to report that I arrived at Meshed on the 10th instant, and took up my quarters in a house which I had engaged through the British Agent in the vicinity of the *Arg*, the residence of the Governor-General of Khorassan.

I found on arrival rooms carpeted and furnished, and some of the Governor-General's servants in attendance; shortly after, the customary trays were brought with a civil message. In fact a cordial reception was intended.

The next day I sent the British Agent, Abbas Khan, to present the letter I had brought from the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Teheran (enclosures 1 and 3 of your letter dated Gulaheq, 30th June 1874), and to ask for an interview.

The following day, the 12th, was fixed, Abbas Khan bringing back a verbal message to the effect that the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Teheran did not wish that I should continue my journey to Khaff.

On the 12th instant, I rode to the *Arg* at the time fixed and was received by the Governor-General in a garden adjoining his residence. His Excellency's manner was not uncordial, but he was surrounded by Mirzas, officers and servants.

After some conversation on indifferent matters, His Excellency, with the evident intention of entering on my business, asked me where I wished to go after leaving Meshed. I replied that I had not yet thought of my departure and would explain my business to him if he would accord me an opportunity of doing so in private.

The afternoon of the 14th was named.

On the 14th on arrival at the *Arg*, I found His Excellency in the same garden and similarly surrounded.

On my arrival the servants were sent away, but several officers and Mirzas remained, and before I was fairly seated, the Ameer of Ghayn entered the garden and was summoned by His Excellency and seated beside him.

His Excellency then, after mentioning the letters that I had brought, commenced on the subject of his grievances, giving me a long list of complaints against the Afghans of the Herat border and the Sirdar Yakoob Khan, and defending his own conduct towards them and calling on his officers to witness that he had borne patiently many insults that he could have punished, and had always forbidden and discouraged retaliations.

Seeing that no good could result from continuing a discussion commenced in such a tone and before an audience now increased to ten or twelve, I replied that my business had no direct connexion with Afghanistan, and, abstaining from any further recurrence to that subject, took leave as soon as I could do so. His Excellency's manner, though excited, was never throughout anything but polite, and he rose to receive me and shook hands at parting with better grace than I had anticipated.

It was evidently, however, not His Excellency's intention to give me the opportunity of conferring with him in private on what I wished, or to facilitate in any way my investigations, and he will certainly oppose to the utmost any move I may make in the direction of Khaff.

Under these circumstances I consider it advisable and in accordance with the sense of the instructions conveyed in your letter of the 30th June above referred to (paragraph 5) that I should defer my journey to Khaff pending receipt of further instructions from you.

I have meantime made such inquiry as was possible into the circumstances of the raid from Khaff, the result of which I submit herewith.

I will premise with a few remarks explanatory of the state of this portion of the Perso-Afghan border, requesting that you will bear in mind that I have been almost entirely dependent throughout on *ex parte* evidence.

The whole Persian border from the Koordish districts as far south as the valley of Mud in the Ghaynat, a line of 350 or 400 miles, bounding the district of Meshed, Turbut-i-Hyderi, Tubbus, and the Ghaynat, is exposed constantly to the ravages of parties of Turkoman horsemen.

The northern part of the Meshed district is protected from direct attack by the low hills skirting the plateau of Kelat-i-Nadiri and also by the occupation of the old fort of Sarraks, which deprives the Turkomans of the advantages of a good base for their operations, and drives them more to the west towards the Murghab River.

The southern part of the Meshed District and the northern part of Turbut-i-Hyderi are open to their attacks through the great plain of Surjam stretching from the mountains of Bakharz to the Murghab and Merve, and connecting with the plain of Bevejan, which extends into the district of Nishapoor.

Thence the whole tract known as the Turbutain, Bakharz and Khaff has a thoroughly exposed border line to the east.

From the Khaff Plain a break in the chain of hills, bounding it on the west, gives access to the Gunabad Valley of the Tubbus district and the villages on the edge of the "Kavir" (Salt Desert). The Khaff Plain again is separated from the Reg Amrani Plain by mountains, through which there are many easy passes; by this route the valleys of Nimbelook and Ghayn and other parts of the Ghaynat are reached.

The Turkomani tribes on this border are the Tekkes, Sārak, and Salor, the former located at Merve, the two latter to the south-west on the Herat border of Afghanistan.

Their raids are made in parties of from 20 to 600 and 700, and the speed and endurance of their horses enables them to reach points at a distance of 50 fursakhs, or nearly 200 miles, from their base, and ordinarily to evade pursuit.

Before the occupation of the town and fort of Sarraks by the Persians, the Tekkes and the Sārak, who had their settlements here, used to pass directly into Persian territory, but they are

now compelled to act from a distant base, either Merve or the Murghab, or to pass westward through Afghan territory.

The Persian authorities allege that the passage of the raiders is permitted by the Afghan border-guards and connived at by the Afghan authorities at Herat, and that they are supplied with provisions, &c., by the Afghan villagers, and thus enabled to extend their incursions to the great distances to which they are now carried.

The Persian Government maintains for the protection of the border a force of several thousand irregular cavalry, chiefly Hazaras. These are stationed at points in the Meshed district, and in the districts of Khaff and Bakhurz. The two last districts are more exposed to attack than other parts of the border, both from their position and because through them lies the road to many fertile valleys in their rear.

Opposed to them on the Afghan side are the small States of Ghorian and Kohsan, held by Khans under the Herat Government, who have each a force of 300 or 400 cavalry constantly employed on the border.

The Persian authorities complain that not only do these give no assistance by keeping their own border, but frequently join with the raiders, and always receive a share of the booty.

From such information as I have been able to obtain here, which, it must be remembered, is entirely *ex parte*, it appears that this has been the state of affairs as far back at least as the last two years.

In August 1872, the Hissam-u-Sultanat, then Governor General of Khorassan, deputed one Haji Azad Khan Kohsani, a Persian employé, to Herat to represent to the Sirdar Yakoob Khan that the inhabitants of his border villages were in the habit of assisting the Turkomans in their raids and to request his interference.

Subsequently, during the years 1872 and 1873, the Persian border-guards came into collision with parties of Turkoman raiders no less than 13 times, and on each occasion the Turkomans are said to have passed through Afghan territory, and in many instances to have made the Afghan villages of Ghorian and Kohsan their base of operations, and, in one instance, when routed and pursued by the Hazara cavalry, to have found refuge in the former village.

In September 1873, it is alleged that a large body of Turkoman and Afghans of Ghorian and Kohsan raided the Khaff Plain and carried off 15 men, 7,000 or 8,000 sheep, and some horses. On their return, the booty was divided by the Turkomans and their Afghan companions. The Persian border chiefs having failed to obtain restitution, the Governor General of Khorassan in December of the same year deputed one Mustowfi Mahomed Ali to Herat to ask for return of the plundered flocks or compensation for the owners.

It was shortly after the departure of this agent, on the 11th of January 1874, that the first news of a raid made in retaliation of the joint Turkoman and Afghan raid by the Khaffees was received in Meshed.

The people of Ghorian and Kohsan being on the alert, the raid was made by Lutf Ali Khan Tymoorí, Governor of Khaff, on the districts of Subzwar, Furrah; 10,000 sheep and 30 camels were brought back to Khaff, and distributed amongst the sufferers from the previous raid; a large portion of these are said to be the property of the people of Ghorian and Kohsan.

The Persian authorities deny that this reprisal was in any way sanctioned or encouraged, and affirm that orders were issued to the Governor of Khaff to prevent distribution of property.

When the news of this raid reached Herat, the deputy from Khorassan had arrived there. He wrote at once on the part of Sirdar Yakoob Khan to ask for restitution of the property, and it was arranged that it should be handed over to an Afghan agent who was to be sent to Khaff.

This agent, by name Mahomed Yusuf, received from the Governor of Khaff 6,000 sheep, which, he was informed, was the whole number carried off. From Khaff he repaired to Meshed to seek an interview with the Governor General.

The Afghans claimed 15,000 sheep. Without admitting this claim, the Governor General told the Afghan deputy that he might return to Khaff and take back any sheep that the Afghans could prove to be their property. This reply being considered unsatisfactory by Mahomed Yusuf, he set off on his way to Herat. *En route* he was met by the Khorassan deputy who persuaded him to return to Meshed with the promise that he would obtain for him the remainder of the sheep; he, however, got no more satisfaction than in the first instance. The Persian agent failed also to recover more than a small proportion of the value of the property claimed. The Governor of Herat denied that any Afghans were engaged in the raid on Khaff, and threw the whole blame on the Turkomans, who, he said, were not his subjects, and could not be restrained by him. He, however, consented to pay as compensation the sum of 200 tomans=800 rupees, the value of about 300 sheep, and this sum was paid.

Since the return of Mustowfi Mahomed Ali, there have been no complaints against the border Afghans, but the Turkoman forays appear to continue not less frequent, and it may be accepted that matters have settled down to their normal condition, —the Afghans giving such covert assistance to the raiders as is required of them, and the Persians defending their border as best they can.

Under these circumstances, it has appeared to me advisable at least to defer my visit to Khaff. Even here I have been unable, through the jealousy of the Persian authorities, to obtain access to any independent sources of information; but I am in hopes that I shall, before I leave Meshed, be able to substantiate the main facts above stated.

Pending receipt of Your Excellency's further instructions, I remain in Meshed.

No. 2.

Diary kept during Tour in Khorassan.

No. 14, dated Teheran, 4th January 1875.

From Captain the Hon. G. C. Napier, on Special Duty in Persia, to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I have the honor to submit herewith a diary kept during my tour in Khorassan, in accordance with instructions received from you; also a diary kept at my request by Kazee Syud Ahmed, whom I had sent alone to Asterabad to await my arrival. The fact of his not being known to be a British servant gave him better opportunities of obtaining useful information than he would have had in my company.

2*nd July*. Received final instructions from His Excellency the British Minister, and sent camp on to Jajarood, the first stage on the road to Mashad.

3*rd July*. *Gulahek to Kammer*, 23 *miles*.—From Teheran or Gulahek there is, besides the route skirting the mountains usually taken by troops and caravans for Shahrood and Mashad, an alternative route running parallel to it, but considerably more to the north. This is said to be a rough and difficult road, but maintaining as it does a much higher level, is preferable in summer.

Starting from Teheran or Gulahek, the summer quarters of the British Legation, a village path leads across the lower undulations of the Alburz mountains, a fertile tract known as Shemiranat. There was still snow on the mountains, and many copious streams traversed the plain. The most striking feature of this tract is the marked contrast between the land within and out of reach of water. A space of a few feet only intervenes between the most luxuriant vegetation, an undergrowth of rank grass, clover, vetches, forest trees, and trees laden with fruit, and a barren, hard, dry soil, bearing only a scanty crop of thistles. This contrast lends to the gardens and hamlets scattered over the hill skirts half their beauty, or rather half their charm. At a distance of 16 miles is the hamlet of Surkh-hissar, distant from Teheran 12 miles. Thence there are two roads, one due east, crossing the Jajarood stream by a ford: the other bending north-east over the spur dividing the Shemiranat from the Jajarood valley. There is an easy ascent of 700 feet in 4½ miles, and a steep descent of 800 feet in 2 miles to the stream, which is spanned by a solid stone bridge of four arches, beyond which is a causeway of a few feet in width crossing the flood bed. Three miles below the bridge is a shooting lodge of the Shah's, below that point the stream divides into numerous channels, and shortly distributes its waters into the canals of the neighbouring portion of the plain of Verameen. From the bridge the route passes east

The Shemiranat.

Jajarood.

up a narrow glen to the hamlet of Kammer, the first stage. Bare brown hills of gravel and alluvium shut in the glen and hamlet with its few patches of corn. Notwithstanding an elevation of 5,200 feet, the thermometer showed a temperature of 95° in the shade at midday. At night it fell to 53°.

4th July. To Giliard, 23 miles.—Leaving Kammer the road winds east up a narrow glen which shortly widens out, showing a little cultivation and low hills on both sides. In 4 miles an elevation is gained beyond which extends a wide undulating plateau extending for 18 miles east, and 12 to 15 in width; bounding it on the north are the lower spurs of Alburz, backed by the high rocky ridge seamed with snow. To the south the plateau falls away to a valley in which flows a small stream from Demavend, beyond is the long dark barren ridge of Karragatch of considerable height separating the plateau from the plains and the caravan route. Two small perennial streams traverse the plateau, the first known as the Boomahind Rood with a hamlet of that name on its banks, the second as the Rood-Hind. Both support considerable extents of cultivation and large gardens. On the Rood-Hind stream is the fine village Siahbund, the population of which are Kurds transplanted by one of the Shahs, probably Shah Abbas the Great; there are also other scattered villages and hamlets of Kurds, who are all Crown tenants. The soil is a good and light-looking alluvium mixed with gravel, with a fair covering of rough grass and wild flowers. In the more barren parts gravel predominates and a hard dark sandstone rock crops out. The wheat and barley were light and poor-looking with no straw, but the grain is said to be large and the yield an average of 25 to 30 fold. A constant supply of water, however, is required to raise even wheat and barley, and this fine tract, with a most delightful climate, and a sun not oppressively hot even at midday in July, is incapable of supporting a population. There are also no such evidences as exist in the south of Persia of the water supply and irrigated area having been in former times greater than at present. The east end of the plateau is broken by a projecting spur of the main range, from the crest of which a fine view is obtained over the wide open valley of Demavend. The peak of Demavend on the north towers grandly above the lower ridges from a gap of which issues a green line of gardens; which spreads out to a couple of miles in width where traversed by the road, thence bending westward it contracts, and finally disappears behind the long slopes of the plateau bounding the valley to the south. Eastwards a barren slope undulates gently to the sky-line, dotted with but a few green spots of cultivation. The large village of Demavend lying to the north of the road is hidden by gardens and tall groves of poplar: it has 400 to 500 houses all inhabited, for the famine was only slightly felt. The population is said to have actually increased by immigration, and this is testified by the appearance of the valley, which is fully cultivated; there is not the usual margin of land thrown out of cultivation.

Boomahind.

Soil and crops.

Demavend valley.

5th July. Saidabad, 21 miles.—Leaving Giliard the road runs east across the valley of Demavend, passing the little stream of that name by a good stone bridge, and thence on for 20 miles through the fertile village lands of Ain-i-Verzan, Jaghoon, and Sarbundan to Saidabad, where the plateau ends abruptly. This plateau is a continuation of the Boomahind tract already described, but has greater width, a more level surface, and a better supply of water. Its soil is a fine alluvium with little sand or gravel, and of considerable fertility, producing besides heavy crops of wheat and barley, maize, pulses, castor oil, and cotton. There are seven fine villages, the four above-mentioned, and Ab-i-Sard, Mazinak, Bagh-i-Shah. One of the smallest, Ain-i-Verzan, pays 60 kharwars of grain and 120 tomans nominal revenue per annum; besides furnishing 50 men to the regiment of Teheran. One-half of the village is held in free grant by Syuds. This assessment though apparently trifling is really high in comparison with that of similar villages in other parts, and indicates a great fertility. With assistance in digging wells and water-courses other parts of the plateau might be brought under cultivation, and would rival in production and in beauty the most favoured tracts of South-Eastern Europe. With a good road over the mountains a large population might be supported, without fear of famine, by the surplus grain produce of Mazanderan, and their more scanty lands and water be devoted to the production of cotton, tobacco, fruits, wine, and other valuable staples of foreign and internal trade. Ain-i-Verzan.

Ain-i-Verzan, overshadowed by lofty mountain ridges seamed with snow, with its avenues of poplars, and green fields watered by a stream dashing down to the rock strewn hill skirt in one white line of cascades, and neat mosque with white octagonal spire showing over the green boughs of elm and sycamore, might compare with any village in the Tyrol or the Swiss Alps.

In spite of its elevation the winter on the plateau is said to be scarcely more severe than in the lowlands; snow falling to a great depth but melting quickly.

On the hill side above Saidabad was the camp of a party of nomads of Turkish origin, but now Sheeahs of the sect known as the Ali Illahi. Their belief is that Ali, the nephew of the prophet, was God incarnate. They appeared to have no notion of the origin of this doctrine, and said that "every body believed "the same;" the tents made of black goats' hair woven in strips were supported by a number of short sticks placed at any angle; though frail-looking they are said to give good protection against both wind and rain; the women of the party were unveiled, and made no show of hiding their faces. They were hard at work making "kroot," a sour cheese of sheep and goats' milk churned in a leather bag. In winter these tribes descend to the lowlands camping on the outskirts of some large village, where they barter their "kroot" for other necessaries. Ali Illahis.

July 6th, To Firoz Koh, 30 miles.—Crossing the valley into which the Demavend plateau falls with a steep scarp the route to Firoz Koh, the next stage, leads up a narrow gorge with rocky

hills on both sides; over a green plateau for a short distance and thence down a wild rugged glen to the banks of the Deli Chai, a small stream flowing into the plain of Verameen. The Deli Chai or "mad stream," flows through a picturesque valley enclosed by lofty mountains of grand outline, throwing out bold rocky spurs of slate and sandstone. The cliffs alternated with green slopes covered with cypress and juniper. On the bank of the stream was a camp of a party of villagers from Verameen, spending the summer in the mountains, with their flocks and herds and families, while their crops were being cut and gathered in by hired hands. The usual laborious process of churning kroot was going on; the men of the party seated and doing the women's work of spinning. From the Deli Chai a good path leads over a very rough tract of country for 14 miles to the Nindrood, a large stream flowing into the Verameen plain. Across the Nindrood is the plateau of Firoz Koh, green and fertile, traversed by the Sowa Shee, a small stream with marshy banks. The village of Firoz Koh is situated on the south side of the plateau at a point where this stream enters a rocky gorge shut in by two opposing cliffs of limestone 300 to 400 feet in height and surmounted with the ruins of an ancient fortress, said to have been built by Alexander the Great. The village has 500 houses, many of which were, however, emptied by the famine. At Sowa Shee, a village six or eight miles higher up the stream, are said to be some rock inscriptions. Through Firoz Koh lies the main post road to Mazanderan. It is now much used by caravans taking rice, timber, and charcoal to the capital, but must shortly be superseded by the Shah's new road further west down the valley of the Haraz.

The Deli Chai.

Sowa Shee stream.

7th July. To Gur Sufeed, 18 *miles.*—From the east a small stream, known as the Gur Sufeed, flows into the Firoz Koh plateau and joins the Sowa Shee, the united streams then flowing south. The route lies directly up this stream. The Firoz Koh plateau thus plentifully watered, produces very large crops of grain. The whole of the north-east portion of the plain known as the Julgah-i-Katalan is under cultivation, and there is ample room for extension. I heard the common complaint of scarcity of hands to till the soil. The lower part of the glen of the Gur Sufeed is a perfect gem, and it would be no easy task to find its match in any country. Fine crops of wheat in full ear extended along its whole length reaching to the foot of the hills and covering every available foot of ground. The fields are separated only by low banks covered with blue corn flower, larkspur, and tulips; every spare strip a parterre, with a carpet of short close green turf. The two villages in the glen, Shah Deh and Kamad, are buried in groves of poplar, elm, and ash. The hill slopes are barren, but their barrenness serves but to enhance the freshness of the verdure they enclose. Opposite to the last-named village the stream makes a sharp bend to the north, passing through a narrow gorge shut in by high cliffs, on the ledges of which are a few gnarled stumps of cypress. The gorge is not more than 100 yards in length; the cliffs on either side, 300 feet in height, are formed of a light coloured limestone different from

Glen of Gur Sufeed.

any of the surrounding rocks. They have the appearance of having been forced into their present position by volcanic action. Beyond the gorge and near its mouth are the ruins of an old fort built entirely of red sandstone on a low hill of the same rock. Thence the valley widens and continues with varying width for ten miles to Gur Sufeed, a grazing ground of a nomadic tribe which winters in the plain of Semnoon. It is extensively cultivated and affords rich pasturage. Every little glen had its camp of black tents. Both men and women were well clothed, the latter unveiled and wearing a good deal of jewellery in the shape of strings of gold coins and beads. The tents were spread with felts and home-made carpets, and appeared clean and weather-proof. Cattle, horses, and large flocks of sheep grazed on the marshy pastures and on the hill slopes. The tribe pay no revenue, giving only a small percentage of their young men to the Shah's army. Ilyats.

8th July. To Khing, 20½ *miles.*—From Gur Sufeed the route follows the valley to its head, and thence crossing a narrow low ridge passes into the valley or plateau of Jash, so named from an old domed tower said to have been built by a Guebre king. The tower is octagonal, 20 feet high, and very massive. There were no carvings or inscriptions. From the Jash valley the road leads across a rough hilly tract of country into the basin of a small stream flowing from the east to a pass leading down to Mazanderan, known as the Anaseran pass, and said to be very rough and difficult; following the stream to its source a steep ascent leads on to the plateau of Khing, an elevated tract supported by a great spur, running out from the Nezwar peak of Alburz into the plain near Semnan or Semnoon. Both the Jash valley and the plateau of Anăsĕrān are cultivated in parts, and the wheat crops were fine; the whole area is however insignificant. The enclosing hills showed nothing but soft rocks, sandstone conglomerates, gravel and shale, but in the bed of the Khing stream were many boulders and pebbles of granite, quartz, and other older formations. Jash I find signifies granary in old Persian. —G. C. N. Anaseran.

The plateau of Khing is a good specimen of the summer quarters of the nomads, with an elevation of 9,400 feet and open to every breeze, it has a perfect climate. The sun's rays even at midday in summer were not too powerful. There is a perennial spring of good water sufficient not only for countless flocks and herds of cattle, but also to water several miles of rich pasture winding through green uplands, which rise in easy undulations, for many miles on either side.

July 9th. To Roodbar, 13 *miles.*—Descending from the Khing plateau, the track reduced to a mere foot-path, crosses the glen of Daz-garrah, which drains into the plains near Damghan. The level bottom of the glen has a length of about one and a half miles, and a breadth of half a mile, is well watered and cultivated. It ends in a narrow defile with high precipices on either side, a perfect natural fortress.

On an overhanging spur is a picturesque Imamzadah with a group of weather-beaten cypress. Crossing a spur the route

enters the valley of Khing Khurrah, the lower portion of which is cultivated, the upper covered with fine rich pasture, on which were grazing several good brood mares, and a herd of fine heavy short-horned black cattle, as superior to the ordinary horned beasts of the East as the rich grass in which they stood knee deep is to the bare pastures of lower elevations.

Following this valley for several miles a picturesque defile is entered, the track winding down through it, overhung by high rocky spurs, well clothed with cypress and juniper; after leaving the pass the stream turns down west towards Mazanderan through a gap in the main range, and is joined by a tributary brook from the plateau of Roodbar, a fertile pasture five or six miles in length and a little less in width, enclosed by spurs of the outer chain.

12*th July*. *To Hooseinabad*, 21 *miles*.—From the Roodbar plateau the route into the valley of Fowlad Mohulla crosses a high spur of the main range, which is connected at this point with the outer range. From the crest of the spur the whole southern mass of the Alburz, clothed from summit to base with dense forest, was visible. A sea of white clouds hid the skirts of the range and the Caspian. Near the crest commenced the forest, at first a few stunted oaks, lower down masses of beech, maple, oak, and other deciduous trees, growing to a great height and girth; no conifers or evergreens were to be seen. Scattered through this forest which extends in many places to the sea, are a few villages, inhabited during the summer only by shepherds and their wives, who are employed in preparing "kroot" for winter consumption. The milk, that of sheep and goats only, is collected in large iron vessels, warmed and left to stand till thickened into a sour mass of curds, and then churned in a wooden cylinder eight feet high, perforated for the escape of the water. The cheese when turned out is cut up into small cubes. It has a bitter taste which, however, it is said to lose after being kept for a month or two.

Fowlad Mohulla.

Descending from the crest of the range the route passes into the plain of Fowlad Mohulla in an easterly direction. The plain stretches for 35 miles, bending west at its further end and closed by barren spurs, through which it drains into the Damghan plain. With an eastern exposure it has also a sterile soil impregnated for the most part with salt. The stream of water flowing through it, and the water of all the kanats is brackish. Fowlad Mohulla is a large village of 200 houses lying 2½ miles from the foot of the pass; it has a good stretch of cultivation, watered by a few small brooks from the glens of the main range. Four miles below the village is a fine pasture, with a spring of drinkable water. From this point the soil of the centre of the valley changes from gravel to a light, porous, spongy, alluvium, through which any water reaching the surface sinks so deep as to form a treacherous quicksand, dry on the surface, but unable to bear the weight of a laden mule, and girth deep. The hills on either side of the valley reach its level in low easy spurs of white and red marls and clay, much seamed and furrowed by weather. The banks of the stream are lined with dwarf tamarisk and various species of salsola, clearly

indicating the nature of the soil. Though no mines are worked, it may safely be presumed that salt exists in large quantities in the mountains, from the upper crest of which the soil of the basin has been washed. From Fowlad Mohulla to Hooseinabad, a spring with a small garden but no habitations, is a distance of 15 miles, without villages or cultivation and with sweet water in one place only. A mile from Hooseinabad on a spur of red sandstone, is the village of Soorkhdeh of 100 houses, at the mouth of a pass leading to Sari, the chief town of Mazanderan.

July 13*th*. *To Cheshma Ali*, 16½ *miles*.—From Hooseinabad spring to Cheshma Ali, a distance of 16 miles, there is no village. The plain becomes if possible more barren than before, and the aspect of the enclosing mountains more forbidding. The soil changes from the light spongy loam of the upper part of the valley to gravel and sand, the surface strewed with boulders and large pebbles. A mile from Cheshma Ali the barren hills close in and conceal it and the village of Astana from view. Passing between the enclosing spurs and across the salt stream which is left, flowing east, the route turns north-east towards a depression above which the tree tops of Astana and of the holy spring shortly become visible. The spring, enclosed by a wall and shaded by a grove of fine plane and poplar trees, lies in a hollow about a mile north of the village (Astana). Below it is a pretty camping ground in a grove of willow, walnut, and elm trees, through which flows a stream of pure water which it feeds. The utter desolation of the valley above the green oasis watered by the stream is most striking, and fully accounts for, if it does not justify, the local belief in the miraculous origin of the spring. Astana.

July 14*th*. *Cheshma Ali*.—Visited the spring which had been the previous day occupied and enclosed by the camp of some ladies, the property of a Governor in Mazanderan. It is chiefly remarkable from the great volume of water that issues from one point, and the complete sterility of the valley and surrounding mountains from which it is presumably fed. The discharge at the spring head was found to be, at a rough calculation, 100 cubic feet per second. The water is perfectly pure, having apparently no matter in suspension, but it is credited with some healing properties, and is said to be especially efficacious in all skin diseases. Possibly the persons who resort to it would find the springs of their own villages equally so if more freely resorted to. Holy spring.

The stratum from which the spring issues is a conglomerate of gravel, with some large angular boulders of limestone, possibly brought to the spot at some very remote period; no other rock is visible. A large tank shaded by a fine plane tree, is filled from the spring and contains a number of tench, said to be sacred, but, as I found not difficult to land with a silver hook. A building erected by the Shah on the edge of the tank, might, if not occupied by some of the pious fraternity of tramps usually to be found hanging about such places, be available for any European traveller who chose to pay a small sum, and would be a most pleasant lodging in the summer.

Being at the junction of one of the main trade routes from Mazanderan and Astrabad to Shahrood and Damghan, and a route much used by pilgrims bound to Mashad, the spring is visited yearly by large numbers of travellers, who usually halt a day to bathe in the stream and pay their respects to the local idol, a mark, which those who are so inclined, believe is the impression of the foot of Ali; the foot-print has been very neatly carved out on a block of stone, and is protected by a wooden railing from too close an inspection.

The village of Astana though watered only by the salt stream, has fine gardens, trees, and corn fields; it is beautifully situated in a green basin, shut in on three sides by barren precipitous heights.

15*th July*. *Sawur*, 23½ *miles*.—There being still some days to spare before the departure of the convoy to Mazenan, I determined to march with a light camp over the Shamsherbur pass; reputed by some to be the ancient Caspiæ Pylœ, into Mazanderan, and back to Shahrood by the main road from the sea over the Chachalyan pass; a detour giving two additional marches, and enabling me to see the passes on the direct road from the sea to the plains of Persia.

Chardeh.

Leaving Chashma Ali the route follows the windings of a green fertile valley with fine crops of wheat and barley to the village of Chardeh or the "four villages." The first of these Kelateh is prettily situated between two white chalk spurs on the south slope of the mountains. The remaining two, (one situated higher, having been abandoned since the famine) lie at the extreme head of the valley buried in dense orchards and groves of tall poplars; overhung by the two rugged peaks of the Shah Koh range, known as the Plash Zindan, they present the most perfect picture of a flourishing Alpine village. The three villages contain about 400 houses, and furnish a contingent of 300 men to the Damghan Regiment. There are a few mosques and a bath, and a public bakery, a great economiser of time, for each peasant is not, as in India, employed for hours in baking his own bread. Situated as the village is on one of the main trade routes, large numbers of mules are kept, and can be readily obtained by travellers at short notice.

Shumsherbur Pass and Kursoo.

From Chardeh the road rises over easy slopes to a pass known as the Sar-i-Halala, thence over wide green plateaux and through a short defile to the Tung-i-Shamsherbur, a curious natural passage between two perpendicular strata of limestone as smooth as a wall, and of 20 to 30 feet in height. The softer strata between and on each side of the limestone have apparently been worn away by the action of the weather. The passage is 150 yards long with an average width of about 18 feet. A little stream and the path finds an exit through a natural gap 14 feet wide and nearly meeting over head. There can be little doubt that this is the pass known as the Caspian gates or Caspian straits. The defile below shortly widens out and the road improves. At the foot of the slope is the green glen of Russoo with the orchards and

poplar groves of a once flourishing village of that name opening on to the Sawur pastures—a wide marshy plain enclosed by mountains clad with forests of oak and elm ("Nawund"). In every lateral glen was a straight line marking an old water channel and the terraced fields lay abandoned. I was informed that there were in former days 32 villages in the "Belook" of Sawur which has now only seven. The cause of this depopulation my informant could not tell me. It was I think on his tongue to say misgovernment, the usual cry, but being a "Ket khuda" or headman, and not knowing my relations with the powers, prudence dictated silence on that score. Decrease of rain-fall was only half admitted. Last winter's snow-fall, so favourable for the crops in the low lands, was too severe to please the farmers in these higher tracts. Depopulation.

16*th and* 17*th July* halted at Sawur.

18*th July.* *To Asp-o-Nyza,* 13½ *miles.*—Moved camp to Asp-o-Neza, a pasture ground with a little cultivation on the banks of a stream of that name, and on the main caravan route between the sea and Shahrood.

19*th July.* *Halt.*—Ascended the peak known as Jehan Namah or "world shower," 8,900 feet; the highest point between the ridge of Shah Koh, and Nezwar far away to the west, the highest point of the range save Demavend. From the summit, when turned, the main chain was visible; to the west the lofty forest-clad ridge throwing out endless buttress-like spurs towards the coast, to the north the coast of the Caspian and the silver line of the river Goorgan. The passes leading to Shahrood appeared like deep ditches in a level green field, so wide and flat are the plateaux above and skirting them. The mountain itself is formed entirely of sandstone and limestone without a trace of volcanic rock. The slopes are clothed with a thick forest of oak. The branches of every tree and bush on the ridge inclined to the south showing the direction of the prevailing wind, which bearing with it dense clouds of vapour from the sea keeps the northern face of the mountains bathed in moisture. Jehan Namah, a peak.

20*th July.* *To Shahrood,* 19¼ *miles.*—Marched to Shahrood. From the Asp-o-Neza the route to Shahrood, following up the course of the stream, passes into a narrow defile, known as the Tang-i-Loodian, overhung by stupendous walls of limestone rock. The strata everywhere violently contorted and in many parts vertical, have their exposed edges worn into the most fantastic slopes.

Though presenting no great difficulties to the passage of guns and carts, such a defile could not be attempted by any force not strong enough to hold the hill tops on either side. Clearing the defile the hills recede slightly, and the road continues up stream, passing occasional small patches of wheat and barley, to the foot of the Shah Koh range, where in a deep hollow lies the village of Shahkohpaeen. Around the sides of the hollow are terraced wheat fields extending far up the mountain slope. The village has 40 houses and ample supplies for a small party. The village of Shahkoh Bala lying about two miles to the north on a spur, has 60 houses and a great extent of good land. It is supposed to be Defile Tang-i-Loodian.

the highest inhabited point in Persia, and is probably 7,800 to 8,000 feet. Both villages lie under the shadow of the high ridge, bearing the local name of Shahkoh-Gokshan. This ridge, rising at Chashma Ali and attaining a height of 13,000 to 14,000 feet, runs about due east and west, and falls away into the plain of Shahrood; unlike most of the highest points of the range, it has a sharp serrated ridge with a sheer face to the north, in the hollows of which large beds of snow lie all through the summer—an unfortunate proximity for the people of Shahkoh, who have to keep the Governor of Astrabad supplied with it at the rate of three loads per house per month; of this they complained loudly. At Shahkoh Bala there are said to be seams of coal, never worked. The lower spurs of Shahkoh are composed almost entirely of clay, chalk, and conglomerate.

21*st July.* *Tash* (*Tash*).—From Shahkoh descending again to the stream and following it for a few miles, the defile narrows, and is at one point enclosed by hills of pure white chalk, clay, and sand. The faces of the spurs were much worn by weather and their formation exposed. The thickness, strike, and dip of successive strata down to the level of the valley might be accurately measured. Three seams of coal and coal mixed with clay were visible at various elevations. One bed of blue clay cut away by the stream showed a seam of good coal which might be worked from the surface. The people of Shahkoh appear not to know the use of the mineral, and had never worked it, but I found that at Tash a few miles off (10 or 12), there was a mine which had been worked for some time, the coal being carried to Gez to supply the Russian steamers. The working of the mine had ceased with the demand, the steamers being supplied from some nearer source, or using "Baku oil" (petroleum). Following this stream to its head the road crosses the Chalchalyan pass, 8,600 feet, over an elevated open spur of Shahkoh, and descends a stream known as the Gandab above, and the Ab-i-Tash lower down, to the junction of the main road and telegraph line to Astrabad, where is a good camping ground half a mile from the village of Tash. The village of Tash, a mere hamlet of 40 houses, lies high up on the mountain. The people were formerly subject to constant incursions of the Turkomans, but for now 30 years have been at peace.

Coal.

Chalchalyan Pass.

22*nd July.* *To Shahrood, 19¼ miles.*—March down the defile of the Ab-i-Tash, the hills opening and getting more barren at every step. At about five miles the defile opens on to a wide plain enclosed by mountains utterly barren and destitute of vegetation. Traversing this plain, which is without villages and sweet water (the Ab-i-Tash being rendered brackish by a tributary from the south), the road enters the Shahrood Bostam plain which extends eastwards to the desert, scarcely broken by the last undulations of the Alburz. There are many large villages on the plain, all walled and surrounded with watch towers, but the state of these defences shows that the need for them has passed. It is now 11 years since a Turkoman has been seen on the plain save in the guise of a peaceful trader. Turning south from Bostam

Bostam Plain.

the road passes between low rocky hills to Shahrood, which lies on the hill skirt imbedded in gardens, groves, and vineyards. The town of about 800 houses is enclosed by a weak wall, without towers or flanking defence. The heat in tents was great, but far more bearable than a similar temperature in India.

23*rd July*. *Shahrood.*—Halted at Shahrood. Received a visit from the Agent of the Governor who resides at Bostam; he reported the road safe, but recommended my waiting three or four days for the convoy. To this I objected.

Some servants of a Russian merchant have been busily questioning my servants and continue to hang about the camp. The merchant, by name Baumgartner, is in some way connected with the Consulate at Astrabad, being probably employed to collect news. They have a large connection and much influence in the town, and take some trouble to cultivate it by keeping open house and giving alms to the poor. I visited their serai and found it full of cotton bales undergoing a rude process of pressing for transport to the port of Gez. Much raw silk is also purchased by them in the district and in the Kurd country. The employés of the trading company are chiefly Armenians, and there are also merchants of that nation. A marked difference in their bearing compared with that of the oppressed outcasts of the same race at Julfa in Isfahan was observable. They are under the protecting shadow of a great empire, and know it, and do not fail to take every possible advantage of it. In the evening I received a visit from the Russian merchant, Baumgartner, accompanied by one M. Ogarodnikoff,* who was said to be a merchant newly arrived with a large stock of goods intended for the Khorassan market. He proposed taking his goods to Subzwar, but not to Mashad. As M. Ogarodnikoff spoke nothing but Russian, our intercourse was limited to a few civilities passed through two interpreters. Russian merchant.

24*th July*. *Shahrood.*—Applied to the authorities for a special guard, intimating that I could not wait for the convoy and was prepared, hearing the road was safe, to march without one.

25*th July*. *To Bedasht.*—Sent camp to Bedasht and rode over to Bostam to visit the Governor. The village or town of Bostam lies on a level plain enclosed by mountains distant from four to ten miles; it is watered by a small stream and numerous "kanats;" a mud wall of some height, with a thickness of six or eight feet at base, and numerous flanking towers enclose it; its circuit may be about one and a half miles; the gateways are defended by strong towers of burnt brick; a circle of gardens and groves of "sinjud" (sweet willow) trees gives cover right up to the walls; within the first wall is another very thick and solid; there are chambers cut in its base to a depth of 10 to 12 feet; this second wall is not complete, but the gaps are backed by irregular mud walled enclosures, and it would prove a very serviceable inner line of defence. In the centre of the town is the Bostam.

* Mr. Ogorodnikof, *vide* p. 253.—This educated gentleman, a Dr. of Medicine, surely could speak English, having recommended himself to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society for this journey to Persia, by a series of long letters to Russian papers, from America. R.M.

"ark" or citadel, a square inclosure with substantial mud walls and good ditch of about 30 feet by 15 feet. The bazaar and inhabited part of the town covers a comparatively small space near the "ark," and the remainder of the enclosure is filled with strong walled gardens. There is space for a large number of men, and the valley in ordinary seasons would afford ample supplies of grain. In the square of the citadel were four old field guns of small calibre and a few ragged looking gunners. The Governor, Kiomurs Mirza, a son of Fateh Ali Shah, has been long resident in Teheran and speaks a little French; he received me in an upper room in European fashion. I found no difficulty in arranging for a special guard. From Bostam to Bedasht is a distance of four miles across an outlying spur of the mountains. Bedasht is a large village of 150 houses of Arabs settled in the country, it is said, during the Beni Abbas Khalifat. They have lost their language and distinctive type. The village and neighbouring hamlet of Saidabad are watered by a fine "kanat" with a stream sufficient to supply a large force.

26th July. To Armian, 21 *miles.* — Marched at 7 a.m. to Armyan, a large village situated in a glen of the hills enclosing the plain of Mayomay to the south. A guard of 30 "sowars" of the border guard joined me *en route.*

Armyan. *27th July. Mayomay,* 16 *miles.* — The village of Armyan, about 1,060 feet above Shahrood, is situated in a barren glen backed by a high ridge of limestone, from the base of which issues a fine spring which serves to water the village with its numerous orchards and gardens, and about a couple of hundred acres of corn land. The limestone ridge which rises to some height appears to have been pushed through a thick strata of red conglomerate, underlying which at some depth is a strata of clay slate. The arable land has a rich soil, and produces fine crops and good fruit. Tobacco of good quality is also grown. The village has 40 houses well walled in; the people are Arabs. They have lost their language and all recollection of their origin, but there are sufficient traces left in the "patois" they speak to prove their southern origin. The road through this village is preferred by small parties of travellers on account of the security afforded by a line of small villages,—Jowdana, Serish, and Kellateh,—extending along the skirts of the hills to Mayomay. Leaving Armyan at 1 p.m. marched to Mayomay arriving at 6 p.m. The village with a good serai of burnt bricks, and a line of fine old plane trees, is picturesquely situated at the foot of a high ridge of limestone rising to about 1,500 feet. A spring of good water fills the "ab-anbar" or reservoir, and irrigates a small stretch of corn land. A detachment of cavalry, under a Yawar or Major, is stationed here for the protection of the half dozen villages lying in the skirts of the plain. For six months previously there had been no alarm of Turkomans, but the day before (the 26th) a small party had seized and carried off the "Nayeb" or Governor's Agent, nephew of the Khan of Mayomay, who had ridden half a mile in advance of his party with only two followers. The body of a poor villager

of Miandusht, who had been caught on the way to his village with a load of grain, was brought in.

July 28th. Miandusht, 24 miles.—The hills south of Mayomay separate the Miandusht valley and the Jah Jerm plain from a wide arid plateau, beyond which the great central desert may be said to commence. The southern slope of this plateau has some villages, the Belook of Bearjemand of the Bostam district, beyond which lies the district of Turshiz, distant about 80 miles. It is crossed in an eastern direction by the caravan route. Running due east from Mayomay the road enters the hills at the fort of Zaydar, which has a small garrison of armed villagers, and crossing them obliquely, reaches the plateau of Kiptchak about six miles from the Miandasht caravanserai. Rising to no height and having everywhere an easy slope, these hills give the Turkoman robbers the very ground they would select, for under cover of the low hills large parties may move unseen to any point of the road. They are scantily covered with thorny bushes, tamarisk, and camel thorn; the surface soil is deep and sandy, the upper stratum being a soft purple and dark red sandstone of four or five feet depth, underlining which is a yellow clay. On the higher hills or hillocks a dark clay slate rock crops out. Boulders and pebbles of igneous rock, trap and granite, are frequent, but there is no such rock to be seen *in situ*. The plateau of Kiptchak has a sandy surface and is almost destitute of vegetation. The caravanserai, a new one nearly completed, is a very fine building, consisting of two squares of about 100 yards a side, with the usual rows of cells on each side of the square; behind these is a vaulted passage for winter stabling, and at the angles sets of rooms termed "khilwats," or private rooms set apart for ladies. There is also a good set of upper rooms. These with three ab-anbars and a well complete a model Persian caravanserai. The building is admirably adapted for the purpose, and in its present state has as good accommodation as the most fastidious could desire. In summer in a rainless climate doors and windows are a superfluity, and in winter the lower rooms are weather-proof and warm. The whole has been newly built, the materials being found on the spot. At first sight it would appear hopeless to construct such a mass of buildings on a sandy plain without a particle of vegetation, but the yellow substratum furnishes first-rate clay, and the scanty growth of thorns on the plain fuel. Of course it is a work of time. The village consists of three houses only, of about 30 families, without any cultivation, and all the water yet found is brackish with an unpleasant smell as if stagnant. The one well has been dug to a considerable depth and the water is still bad.

Caravanserai.

July 29th. Abbasabad, 24 miles.—The plain in which is situated the hamlet of Abbasabad stretches away for many miles north-east. There is no doubt that the greater part was at one time, and that all might be, cultivated and might support a population, though at great expense, in digging wells and kanats. A greater obstacle than want of water is the insecurity of life due

to the incessant incursions of the Turkomans. These, continued since they found their limit on the Atak or north hill skirt, have no doubt ruined this district as they have all others not defended by distance or natural obstacles. Now that this evil has been certainly in a great measure removed, there is nothing to prevent recolonization, except perhaps want of colonists. The population of parts of the Arab coast might supply these as it has done before. Leaving Miandasht and crossing the plain north-east the road reaches a low range of hills similar to that crossed yesterday, short steep undulations, alternating with open level tracts covered with a thin growth of thorns, wild almond, and tamarisk.

Copper. The plains and hills are covered in many parts with scoriæ or clay of copper founderies worked in former days. The ore is found, it is said, in many places, and the village was once noted for its copperware. About 8 or 10 miles south of the village is a spot known as "Madanha" or the mines, now filled with water; at one time extensively worked.

Volcanic rocks. The hills appear to be formed almost entirely of trap rocks, the first rock of volcanic origin *in situ* met with in the range; when well inside the range the peculiar formation of the ground, which swells into waves, the crests pointed, and their north slope nearly perpendicular and falling away in the steps or gradations peculiar to trap formations, at once strikes the view. In some parts the rocks, trap, and amygdaloids are hard, and in others soft and friable, the vesicular cavities filled with white crystals. Clay and clay slates appear interstratified with the trap. The soil composed of this rock is said to be fertile. From Alhaq, a small fort in the last folds of the hills, tenanted by 90 colonists who receive a grant from Government for protection of the passes, the road leads through a gap in the low hills to the edge of the first steppe of the great central desert, a wide arid plain stretching away for 60 or 70 miles east and south, where it is bounded, as on the west and north, by low hills, the ranges of Khar Touran and Dooroonay on the border of the Toorshez district. From the gap or "Dahana-i-Alhaq" skirting the desert is reached at

Georgians. about the 24th mile the village of Abbasabad. The villagers, descendants of Georgians, appear to be well off and contented, and on good terms with the Government and the common enemy, the Turkomans.

July 30*th*. *Mazeenan*.—From Abbasabad the road skirts the edge of the desert about due east, at about 7 or 8 miles the Pul-i-Abresham, built by Shah Abbas, marks the boundary between the

Pul-i-Abresham. Bostam district of Irak and the Subzwar district of Khorassan. The stream known as the Kalshor is now a small rivulet, brackish and bitter, and there is no indication of its ever carrying a large body of water. It drains a wild glen in which are the villages of Feroomad and Ferozabad and also the Jah Jerm plain. Beyond the bridge and the little hamlet of Sadarabad there is a depression in the surface of the desert now covered with a white saline efflorescence, but at times evidently a wide marsh confining the road to the hill skirts. On the outer edge of this depression all vege-

tation ceases. The villages of Katia and Seves, watered by fine kanats, lie at the edge of the desert; beyond these are the ruins of the old town of Bahmanabad covering a large extent of ground; being built entirely of sun-dried bricks, they must in time disappear. A mile beyond is the village of Mazeenan containing now 300 houses. Around it are extensive ruins, among others those of a large caravanserai with thick mud walls faced with burnt bricks, built in patterns and ornamented with arabesques and Cufic inscriptions. Mazeenan had formerly 900 houses, and the whole district was populous and highly cultivated. A good deal of silk was raised up to a late date, and copper ore found in the district was smelted. At present but a small quantity of silk is raised and the copper mines are closed. The district was ravaged by Nadir Shah, and after his death again by the army of Fateh Ali Shah, who besieged the Khan of Jouven, a neighbouring hill state, in the old fort of Kafir Kalla, and after a long siege carried him off prisoner to Teheran. It has not yet recovered the effects of its long occupation by what was a hostile force, but from the Turkomans it has not suffered for more than 20 years.

July 31*st. Feroomud,* 17½ *miles.*—Marched from Mazeenan to Feroomud, the first village on a road through the mountains leading to Jagatai, the chief village of the state of Jowein, and thence to the turquoise mines and Nishapoor. From Mazeenan the road, after passing through the ruins of Bahmanabad, strikes across the plain north-west to a gap through a low range of hills, marked by a series of dark red conical heights and consisting almost entirely of amygdaloid trap and trap tuffs weathered for the most part into easy slopes, but with many isolated masses of harder substance marking the original formation. Inclined strata of limestone or sandstone showed in places between the masses of igneous rock. From the pass the road enters a wide level plain draining south-west and covered with a good growth of vegetation fit for pasturage; the soil for five or six feet in depth consisting entirely of disintegrated particles of trap rock washed down from the surrounding hills. Large flocks of sheep and goats were feeding on the plain, at the far end of which lies the village of Feroomud. At 10.30 reached Feroomud and encamped. The village which has only 200 houses was formerly a small town, but the famine emptied 100 houses and ruins are visible in every direction. Though free for some time from the attacks of Turkomans, the Governor of the Belook had only a few days before been carried off by a party of them, and it is feared killed. On the skirts of the village is a picturesque old fort and the ruins of a very handsome mosque, dating certainly from the Arab invasion. An inscription in modern Arabic shows that it was repaired 460 years ago by a Governor of Semnoon. The two centre arches are 50 feet in height, with a span of 30 feet, and are ornamented in elaborate patterns and covered with Cufic inscription. The Mihrab is very handsomely ornamented with arabesques and inscriptions. The inhabitants, a mixture of Arabs and Ajam, furnish 50 men to the regiment of the district, and pay an annual revenue of 1,000

Feroomud plain.

Old mosque.

tomans and 300 kharwars of grain. The land is watered by a stream which had, however, been dry for seven years, and by a karez, or underground watercourse.

August 1*st*. *Jagatai*, 31 *miles*.—Between Feroomud and Jagatai the great spur of Alburz, which runs south of Jah Jerm into the plain of Nishapoor, is crossed. The latter valley lies on the north slope of the spur nearly due east of the former. The road runs for some miles across a level uncultivated plain with sandy soil, following the course of a rivulet, which now holds a fair stream of water, but has, it is said, been dry for seven years. This water irrigates the upper half of Feroomud. Thence entering a narrow glen, enclosed by low hills of trap and various coloured marls, it passes the village of Manida, a flourishing hamlet of 30 houses with fine gardens, plantations of mulberry, and a good deal of corn land, and at ten miles reaches the crest of the ridge and the pass into Jouven. On either side of the pass bare lofty crags of trap rocks rise to a height of several hundred feet, but the slopes of the mountains are generally easy and accessible. Below stretches the wide valley of Jouven, and beyond it, separated by a low ridge, the parallel valley of Isperayeen, bounded by the mountains Aladagh and Shah Jehan. Both valleys drain west, the drainage line being marked by a series of small walled villages. After a short steep descent the road bends east over the low spurs of the mountain, crossing numerous wide ravines, in each of which is a hamlet or a string of fine walled gardens, orchards, and vineyards. At about the 30th mile the road turns down a wide ravine running from the Kah-i-zar about north-east, in the gorge of which lies the town of Jagatai. The narrowest part of the gorge, in the centre of which there is a high mound, and both flanking spurs were formerly defended by strong mud towers now falling into ruins. An Imamzadah occupies the site of the central fort. A good stream of water flows down the ravine and irrigates a long stretch of orchards and mulberry plantations. The town is enclosed by a double wall with sides of about one-third of a mile and substantial flanking towers. It was formerly a stronghold of Allah Yar Khan, Chief of Jouven, who with his brother, Jafir Khan, held all the country as far as Mazinan and Subzwar, till defeated by Feth Ali Shah in person shortly after his accession. Having very little irrigated corn land the population was nearly destroyed by the famine, and there are now but 100 houses occupied.

Manida.

Manida Pass.

Jouven valley or plain.

Jagatai.

2nd August. *Kamaistan*, 18 *miles*.—Marched from Jagatai to Kamaistan. From Jagatai the Jouven valley bends a little south and reaches its greatest width. The cultivated portion follows the line of greatest depression of the valley which is nearest the hills forming its north boundary, towards which also the route passes with a general direction east-north-east. The valley as far as Kamaistan, the nearest village in that direction, is uncultivated, but the soil is apparently a good light marl, much mixed with disintegrated trap rocks, and several small streams flowing for eight or ten miles over the dry plain, still retaining

Jouven valley.

Soil.

a good head of water, show that there is every facility for karez irrigation. In similar situations further down the valley the lines of mounds marking these water-courses run at 150 yards apart, each collecting from the soil its own supply of water. Kamaistan and the neighbouring village of Shahr Istanak, depending on one of the mountain streams and having no karez water, suffered during the famine more than their neighbours, but there are, it is said, 10 or 12 other villages similarly situated. The first with 150 houses and population of about 700 to 800 was entirely depopulated. Of the present occupants six families are the remnant of the old community collected by the Governor of Jouven from different parts (one family from as far as Asterabad, 120 miles distant), the remainder hired labourers sent by the Governor. An Amil or Collector is settled in the village to prevent a fresh desertion of the desolate ruins and to bring it into a revenue-paying condition. Shahr Istanak has 20 or 30 families left out of 300.

Old "kanats."

Depopulation.

3rd August. Rabat-i-Gez, 46 *miles.*—Marched from Kamaistan to Rabat-i-Gez, 46 miles, 14 hours. The first 20 miles of this march is through the most fertile part of the Jouven valley. There are no less than 25 villages, 8 or 10 of them comparatively large and flourishing. Several streams from the mountains on the south and numerous "karez" supply water for the fields, and the unirrigated (barani) land sown with barley and wheat is more than double the irrigated area. The return for seed sown on such land is from 10 to 15 fold, and this year as much as 25. At the 28th mile is the village of Hosseinabad (a hamlet with only one stream of brackish water, and the last in the district of Jouven). Thence is a stretch of about 17 miles across a barren desert plain draining still to the west without surface water of any kind save a small stone cistern with domed roof filled by the winter rains. Near this was a camp of nomad Beloochis, portion of a tribe removed here from Poorman Shir six or seven generations ago, *i.e.*, 300 to 350 years at the ordinary oriental computation of 50 years for a generation. The water of the cistern, their only supply, was very cool and fresh, but full of a very lively species of water insect. In the driest parts of this tract were large fields of water-melons, the plants young but green and vigorous. There were also large unirrigated sowings of barley, very thin and with short straw, but the ear and grain fairly good. Rabat-i-Gez is a large village in the Chiefship of Boguiray of the Nishapoor District. It has 100 houses inhabited, ample crops of grain and large flocks of sheep, horse, and cattle, and is yet entirely dependent for potable water on the village of Khushab, three miles off. A single well of brackish water serves to supply the cattle. At this point the valley contracts to a width of 8 or 10 miles, and a few miles further is divided by a low isolated hill, known as the Kah-i-Batow, into two undulating plateaux, the first known as the Julgay-i-Batow, the second as the Julgay-i-Shorab.

Dusht-i-Seffiabad.

Beloochis.

4th August. Madan Bala, 25¼ *miles.*—Marched from Rabat-i-Gez to Madan Bala, one of the villages inhabited by the miners

employed in the turquoise mines. The mines formerly unique have now rivals in Toorshez and Yezd, but the income derived from them by Government has, in spite of this increased, being 6,000 tomans this year, a larger sum than ever before collected.

Revenue of turquoise mines.

The villagers of Madan are prosperous and well to do, having no cultivation save a few fruit and mulberry gardens, the famine only affected their savings. The trade in turquoise is almost entirely in the hands of a few local agents, who purchase the stones at the mines and send them to Mashad, whence the best are exported almost exclusively to Russia. Between Rabat and Madan there is a rise of 1,000 feet, and the country generally has a better aspect. The few villages passed are well watered, and have good gardens and grain crop. All are enclosed and fortified.

5th August.—Halted at Madan to see the mines and ascend the mountain above them, the Koh-i-Madan, from which a good view is to be had of the upper valleys of the Koordish districts. Marousk inhabited by the thieving Amarloo Koords, Bam, and Safiabad, by the Boguirag's and Sultan Maidan, the summer pasture ground of the Jaferanloo.

6th August. Nishapoor, 28 miles.—Marched to Nishapoor, 28 miles, 7½ hours. *En route*, about two miles from Madan is a salt mine owned and worked by the villagers. The bed of salt is exposed for 40 feet, and is probably very much thicker. The mine pays a revenue of 300 tomans per annum. A few years back another mine in the mountains of the main chain was worked, but a discovery of a bed of salt nearer to Nishapoor has decreased the demand, and they are both now worked only by the nomads and neighbouring villagers. From Madan downwards, through the valley of a small stream known as the Ab-i-Marousk to the plain of Nishapoor, the hills on either side are formed of coloured marls and clay, on the surface often capped with layers of trap, also of a thick bed of porphyritic conglomerate tinged with iron and a white crystalline limestone, and sand stone, the strata generally inclined on an edge and worn down into round bare slopes showing distinctly the colours of the component rocks. The plain of Nishapoor, bounded on all sides by barren mountains, is still, in spite of neglect and misgovernment, a perfect oasis. Sloping gently west, it receives from the north the drainage of two great divisions of the chain and of the lower hills to the east and south. It has, however, lost much of its former prosperity; but a small number of its 12,000 water courses are still open, and the villages are half empty and half their houses ruined. The number of villages is stated to be 1,200, but 700 or 800 would probably be nearer the mark. The fine garden of Allah Verdi Khan is always available for camping, and is preferable to any ground nearer the town.

Salt mine.

Plain of Nishapoor.

7th August. Nishapoor.—Halted at Nishapoor and examined the ruins, or rather rode over the site of the two former towns, that of the Arabs and the older one said to have been built by

Shahpoor. Nothing is left above ground save high banks and fragments of masonry.

8th August. Dehrood, 16 *miles.*—Marched to Dehrood across a fine level plain with numerous streams and water-courses and large villages embowered in gardens and groves. The mountains of straw lying on the threshing-floors told of an abundant harvest, and in fact this portion of the plain is most fertile and raises corn sufficient to supply the deficiencies of all the districts round. Dehrood itself is a large village of 500 houses, of which 300 are inhabited, situated in a deep glen, up which lies the road to Mashad. The alternative road by Sharifabad turns off at Kadamgah, four miles from Dehrood, and skirting the main range crosses between two branches of it reaches the plain of Mashad; it is 18 to 20 miles longer, but a carriage can be driven the whole way. Dehrood has large gardens and vineyards on the terraced slopes of the hills, but very little corn land, and consequently suffered severely in the famine. This year with an exceptionally good harvest about 200 kharwars of grain was threshed out, giving about ½ lb. each to a population which may be estimated at 800 for the year's consumption. Sharifabad route.

9th August. Jaghark, 22 *miles.*—Marched to Jaghark, 22 miles, 6 hours. From Dehrood the road runs along the bank of of a small stream through dense groves of plane, ash, and poplar, into a narrow defile between high craggy spurs and cliffs of soft slates, the strata vertical or inclined. From Dehrood the ascent, of about 3,500 feet, is made in seven miles, the road good all the way, narrow in parts, and steep far the last half mile, but everywhere a very fairly good bridle road. The descent to Jaghark, of about 4,000 feet is equally easy, and quite above the average of mountain roads in Persia. Thence from the Rabat or "way-side-house" to Jaghark, a distance of about 15 miles, is a pleasant bridle-path winding through woods along the banks of a rapid mountain stream. So good is the road compared with the ordinary Persian hill tracks, that it is impossible to follow the accounts of previous travellers. Ferrier calls it the worst mountain road he had ever seen, and Taylor describes the heights enclosing the defile as inaccessible to infantry. The cliffs and crags are no doubt inaccessible, but from the village of Dehrood they may be turned by an ascent easy for infantry of half an hour, from whence the hill tops above the cliffs undulate so gently that a defending force would have very little the advantage of ground. It is unlikely, however, that any force would take this road in preference to the open one by Sharifabad. Jaghark is a fine large village of about 250 inhabited houses with extensive orchards, fuel and timber plantations and terraced vineyards. The trees felled for timber are chiefly plane and poplar; the plantations for fire-wood are thick copses cut down to the stumps after the wood has attained a girth of five to six inches. Dehrood Pass.

10th August. Mashad, 20 *miles.*—From Jaghark to Mashad is a distance of 20 miles; for the first five or six miles following the stream through thick woods past the large villages of Turgoveh

and Gulistan. From Gulistan the valley opens out, and about three miles beyond it the plain of Mashad is reached. The trap of the upper part of the valley here gives place to granite of a rather soft and friable texture, which crops out at the base of the range and forms low ridges. From the summit of one of these known as the "Tuppa-i-salam," a good view of Mashad is obtained; the "Shrine" with its gilt dome and minarets forming a conspicuous object. Around and beyond the town is a barren plain, with few villages, and apparently little either to attract or interest a stranger who should look beyond the allurements of the town itself. On reaching my quarters under the guidance of the British Agent, I found that I was placed more than a mile from the inhabited portion of the town, in a quarter known as Sarabeh, usually styled by the facetious inhabitants "Kharabeh" or ruined. This is a mistake which I hope to be able to rectify.

Maragha regiment.

11*th August. Mashad.*—Saw the Persian Regiments of Maragha on parade, awaiting inspection by the Governor. The regiment is one of the oldest in the Persian service, and has had several sets of European officers of different nationalities. There is little trace of European discipline left. The men are all Turks of Azerbaijan; small but hardy looking; badly dressed and badly set up and drilled. Their officers were admitted to be incapable of getting through an ordinary parade, the Lieutenant-Colonel only having any sort of military instruction. This officer had spent several years in Europe and was for two years at St. Cyr. The regiment has served for 13 months continuously at Sarraks almost without pay and often short of provisions, and rarely able to move out of the confined space of the fort. The elevé of St. Cyr did not attempt to conceal their irregularities and shortcomings, but praised the men, saying they were better marchers than Europeans, very easily managed and good shots, and attributed the spirit of discontent, sometimes exhibited, to the maladministration of the local authorities. The regular troops, and specially those with any "taint" of European discipline and leanings are, he said, disliked and neglected by the Governor, an irregular soldier of the old stamp, and usually return to the capital mulct of pay, out of uniform, and thoroughly disorganized and discontented.

Wali of Khorassan.

12*th August. Mashad.*—Paid an official visit to the Governor styled the Wali, whom I found in the garden of the "ark" surrounded by secretaries and servants. He showed himself a conservative of the true old stamp, not only disliking all things new, but willing to retrograde to any extent. The repudiation of the Reuter concession met with his full approval, especially as it involved the stoppage of the railway works; knowing that he was a protegée and creature of the late Sadr Azim (present Minister, Foreign Affairs) I was surprised to find him holding such opinions, for they must be directly contrary to those of the Minister. The Minister has unfortunately a quarrel of some standing with the Hissam-u-Sultanah, and shortly before the Shah's departure for Europe, used his influence with success to procure

his recall from Khorassan, and caused the present Governor, an illiterate old chief of the Shah Sevend tribe, to be appointed in his place. The change was not a happy one for the province, for the Shah Sevend is, so far as I can hear, a narrow-minded bigot, without the ability and education to fit him for so high a post. He is avaricious and short-sighted, sufficiently sensible to keep on good terms with the powerful community of priests, whom he flatters by many attentions and by strict performance of his religious duties, and retains in his interest by large presents, but insatiable in his demands on the purses of all who in any way come within his power. He is disliked by the troops whose pay he appropriates, by the merchants whose interests he neglects or injures for a small personal profit, and by the chiefs whom he insults and robs. Such was the account I received of a Governor who has replaced the most able and popular Prince in Persia.

Thursday, 13*th August*.—Visited the camp of the Maragha regiment, which is pitched outside in preparation for the march to Teheran. Only some small matters regarding pay remain unsettled, the soldiers demanding pay and the officials accounts and receipts for money that has never reached the regiment. There can be no doubt of the truth of this. The officers are not immaculate, and a considerable portion of the men's pay stays in their hands, but the system of "Mudakhil" or misappropriation is known to commence at the highest and to descend to the very lowest grade in the service. I was much amused by a characteristic answer of a Persian soldier to my question, whether he had any hope of receiving his arrears of pay. "Our fathers never got them," he said, "why should we?" The camp I found pitched without any order, and no attention paid to conservancy; the tents of single canvas are light, and appeared serviceable. The allowance is one to twenty-five men, and they could hold no more. Within the camp were picketed 4 or 500 baggage animals, camels, horses, and donkeys, all the property of the men, who are allowed no carriage even for their tents. When in garrison many of them also make a living by selling fuel, carrying bricks, &c., thus eking out their scanty pay.

Camp of Maragha regiment.

14*th August*.—Visited the Governor and found him, contrary to agreement, surrounded by secretaries and officials, among others the Khan of Ghaeen.

15*th August*.—Visited the "Mutwulli Bashi," or "Chief Custodian" of the Shrine, Mirza Saeed Khan, Ex-Minister, Foreign Affairs. The old man received me courteously and kept strictly to ordinary topics of conversation, though it is known that he has much influence with the Governor, and is in fact his chief adviser in all matters not strictly local.

Mirza Saeed Khan.

When Foreign Minister he was known to be a strong Russian partizan and unfavourable to English interests. He was implicated in the cabal with which the Shah found himself confronted on his return from Europe, and it was mainly through the influence of the British Minister that he was removed to his present secluded retreat. I feel entitled therefore to count him as an

adverse influence. I heard enough during my visit to convince me that he was still *en rapport* with the politics of the capital, and could not therefore be ignorant, as he pretended to be, of my identity and business.

Sertip Yusuf Khan, Hazara.

25th August.—Paid a visit to Sertip Yusuf Khan, *alias* Moolla Yusuf Hazara, one of the greatest robbers and best servants of the Persian Government on the border. He was said by the Afghans to have led the Khaff raid but denies it, and says that it is his ill fortune to have every crime committed between Mashad and Herat attributed to him. He is a quiet looking old man, showing a good deal of the Tartar in his face, rather beyond the age for active exertion. He is still a bigoted Sunni and may any day turn against his Shiah employers, whom he sincerely hates. Being a protegée of the Hissam-u-Sultanah,* he meets with scant civility at the hands of the present Governor. Seventeen Turkoman prisoners were marched out and shown to me. They were Tekkahs of Merve who had lately been captured by the Sertip's son, Ismael Khan. Only one or two of them showed the true Tartar type, the rest were evidently half breeds, the scum of the "obahs." They were heavily chained, but not badly lodged and fed. In accordance with a time-honoured custom they were the property of their captors, who held them for ransom. This utterly indefensible system, though profitable enough to such men as the Sertip, must go far to perpetuate the sufferings of the unfortunate Persian villagers on the border, for it reduces the risks incurred by their persecutors to a mere question of money.

Turkoman prisoners.

Jamshedi Chief.

Wednesday, 16th September.—Received a visit from a Jamshedi Chief by name Alla Yar Khan, whose father, Zeman Khan, had served under Major Pottinger at Herat. My visitor having rendered some service to the Hissam-u-Sultanah at Herat in 1857 was after the evacuation removed by him to Mashad with 800 of his tribe, and settled in the village of Kannabust, eight miles from Mashad. They supply 100 horse to the Persian Government for border defence, but pay no revenue save a light water rate. They are still Sunnis and in constant communication with the Turkomans, and with Herat, and are dissatisfied with their position under the Persian Government. Difference of religion prevents amalgamation, the fault being mostly on the side of the Shiahs, and the constant exactions of Persian Governors destroy all feeling of gratitude and loyalty.

Proffered service.

Four thousand Turkomans, the Chief said, were ready to join Yakoob, and he offered his services to prevent their moving; a favour I declined with all necessary explanations. I have had several such visitors, and though satisfied in this case, feel sure that some of them were sent by the Governor to discover, if possible, the secret of my visit to Mashad.

Jews of Mashad.

18th September.—Received a visit from some of the Jews of Mashad; these people number about one hundred families; they are now in name Mahomedans, having been forcibly converted in

* By whom he was brought from Herat in 1856.—G. C. N.

the year 1838. One of their number gave me a long and authentic account of their conversion and of the massacre preceding it, differing slightly from that given by Dr. Wolff and General Ferrier. The community has lately slightly increased in numbers, is well to do, and not openly oppressed as long as its members are careful to conform outwardly to the rites of the dominant religion. They would be most useful in many ways to any British officer travelling in or resident in that part of the country. Some of them have a lively recollection of the rewards given to relatives of theirs who were useful to English officers in Cabul and Herat.

24th September.—Received a visit from a Sarbundi chief of Sekoha, whose lands have been lately confiscated by the Persian Government of Seistan as a punishment for his participation in the recent rebellion against the Persian Government. There is evidently a large party in the country hostile to Persian rule, and particularly to Persian rule as administered by the Meer of Ghaeen, whose return, which has been talked of, would apparently be the signal for fresh disturbances. The chief proposes going to Teheran to obtain restitution of his lands, and he may succeed, for the policy of the Shah and the Central Government is more liberal than that of the provincial Government. Sarbundi chief.

26th September.—Obtained the necessary order for guards to accompany me to Kelat, a district in the mountains north of Mashad. The Khan of Kelat-i-Nadiri is the medium of communication between the Khorassan Government and the Turkomans of Merve.

27th September. Kardeh, 24 miles.—Left Mashad for Kelat-i-Nadiri at 11.30, and traversing the valley of Mashad in a northerly direction crossed the Kashaf Rood by a good bridge known as the Pul-i-Shah. The Kashaf Rood or Abi Mashad flows from the Chashma-i-Gélás, a small lake near Chinárán, and collecting the drainage of the Mashad valley passes out east by the gorge known as Akdarband to the Pul-i-Khatoon where it joins the Ab-i-Herat. Below Mashad the water becomes brackish from the contributions of some small tributaries draining the lower spurs of the Khelat range. The Pul-i-Shah is wide and solidly built and looks quite out of proportion to the insignificant stream it spans. The streams of Persia are, or have been, for the most part well bridged, but the same apparent disproportion between the water-way allowed and the size of the streams is everywhere observable. The Persians like the Spaniards (after the old "Peninsula" joke) appear to have sold their water to pay for the bridges. But in both countries the necessity for the precaution is obvious. Both are for the most part treeless, with steep slopes and a spasmodic rainfall, and are thence liable to very sudden and violent floods. Kashaf Rood.

From the Kashaf Rood the ground gradually rises for 12 or 14 miles to the foot of the hills, and the route, following up a small stream, passes the villages of Razán and Anderukh, and enters a narrow gorge known as the Darband-i-Kardeh. The gorge is shut in by a high mountain formed of immense tabular masses of Darband-i-Kurdeh.

metamorphic rock of a compact crystalline texture of dark grey colour with many veins of quartz. On entering the hills the outer slopes are seen to be formed of conglomerate, weathered down to easy slopes. Under this is a stratum of slate; further on, the spurs are crowned with regular layers of stratified rock, detached masses of which cover the slopes and are piled up at their foot. These were for the most part a hard limestone formed of a mass of shells, and a fossil substance apparently black coral. The shells were of various forms, bnt I observe no nummulites. The metamorphic rocks would appear to have been forced by some convulsion of nature through these overlying strata, and form a high outer barrier of inaccessible crags, rising to a height of 1,000 to 1,500 feet above the hill skirts. After clearing the gorges the track enters an open valley at the head of which lies the small village of Kardeh. I was received and hospitably entertained by Rahim Khan of Choolai, the owner of 12 villages in this and adjoining valleys. The villages are inhabited by Koords and Turks, formerly a wild lawless set, but now in better order. They furnish 40 horsemen for the protection of the border.

28th September. Kardeh, 28 miles.—Left Kardeh following the Kardeh stream, through rugged tortuous defiles to a glen in which it rises among the spurs of a high rocky range, the main chain of this branch of Elburz. The peaks of this chain present a most picturesque appearance, the strata of a hard grey limestone are for the most part on edge, and rise in sharp jagged teeth to a height of 6,000 or 7,000 feet, or 1,000 to 500 feet above the general level of the mountain. Vegetation is very scant, the only tree growing wild is a cypress or juniper (*Juniperus excelsa*), common to all parts of the Alburz that are beyond the reach of the moist breezes of the Caspian. With a stunted scanty growth this tree has a form and colour exactly suited to the barren rocks on which it grows. The gnarled and twisted trunk and grey spreading branches clinging to the face of a shear cliff or crowning a rocky pinnacle give a finishing touch to the wild and desolate picture presented by the higher glens of Elburz, the bare dry skeleton of a mountain range. Beyond the small hamlet of Aoul, seven or eight miles from Kardeh, on a chance block of crystalline limestone, fallen from an over-hanging cliff, is an inscription in Arabic and Persian, dating from the year 916 of the Hijra, and recording a victory of Mohamad Shaibani, the Usbeg conqueror of Bokhara, over the unbelievers whom we may presume to be the Persian Shiahs.

Kelat chain.

Juniper.

Rock inscription.

On a scarped rock closing in the valley in front are the ruins of an old fort. Following an eastern branch of the valley, in which the Kardeh stream rises, the route crosses the central ridge by an exceedingly steep and bad path, and drops at once into the glen of Vardeh which drains to the Turkoman plain. In the centre of the glen surrounded by a few poor-looking wheat fields is the hamlet of 20 houses. The people are Turks and live by grazing large flocks of sheep and goats; for their fields produce at all times light crops and often nothing. Shut in by high mountains

Vardeh.

except to the north-east, with an elevation of 7,000 feet, and a poor stony soil, it is surprising that any population should be able to subsist, but the Kelat valleys, those on the north and higher part of the range, are said to have a population of 8,000 or 10,000, and have in former times taxed the whole powers of the most powerful rulers of Khorassan to subdue them.

29*th September.* *Kelat, 22½ miles.*—From Vardeh to Kelat is a distance of about 22 miles. The track, a good bridle path, leads for some miles east-north-east over low undulating hills of coloured clays and shales with a fair covering of herbage fit for pasture, and then descends north down a narrow glen rugged and wild, and picturesque beyond description. On one side steep slopes of purple, green, and brilliantly red clay and marls with high projecting buttresses of sandstone scantily clothed with fine specimens of juniper; on the other peaks and crags of slate and limestones, the strata inclined and sending out into the glen steep spurs, presenting often an unbroken sheet of rock for 1,000 feet, with a sharp edge and distinct serrated outline. Dense thickets of the "Zerish" or barberry with crimson leaves and berries lined the water-course. Following the stream along a rough boulder strewn path for five or six miles to its junction with a fine stream flowing from the west, a narrow pass, giving passage through the first rocky barrier of Kelat, is entered. In places there is scarcely room for more than one horse to pass, and the track is carried from boulder to boulder in the bed of the stream across very frail shaky-looking temporary bridges. Clearing the pass an open barren and desolate-looking valley is reached, bounded on the north by the south portion of the natural bounding wall of Kelat. A ridge of rock running nearly east and west in a straight line with unbroken level summit, below which for about 300 feet is a natural scarp of dark brown rock, falling away to the level of the valley in steep slopes and spurs of sandstones and coloured marls; only one gap was visible in the whole line, and this, though apparently inaccessible, had been carefully closed up with a stone wall. Skirting the line of the natural glacis of this fortification for four or five miles, the road leads into a narrow defile known as the Darband-i-Arghoonshah, by which the stream gains access through the rocky barrier to the plateau of Kelat. In the centre and narrowest part of the defile a new gateway was being built in apparently purposeless imitation of Nadir's gates, which have been swept away by successive floods. Nadir's intention in closing up the gaps in the rocky barrier of Kelat was clearly to make it a stronghold for his descendants, who might with this safe retreat and the wealth of plundered Delhi at command, have at least a fair start in the scramble for power in Khorassan and Persia, that he well knew would ensue on his death.

Darband-i-Arghoonshah.

Passing through the gateway I found a guard of Persian Sirbaz drawn up. They were if possible more ragged than their comrades at Mashad, having been without relief and without pay or clothing for six months. The men looked sickly and worn out; they have heavy duty, and the water of the stream is said to be

Regiment of Kasveen.

unwholesome. I noticed that in spite of a swift current, the gravel bed was covered with a coating of green weed by which the water was slightly colored, possibly it may derive from this some injurious qualities. The remains of a covered water-course constructed by Nadir is still visible outside the Arghoonshah gate. It carried the water of a spring, five or six miles distant, into the village Arghoonshah. Like all other of his works, of which traces remain on the plateau, it was built solidly and well, and meant to last. From the gateway the road led, under the walls of a small round fort showing a couple of guns, through the village of Arghoonshah, and down a green fertile valley with a good stretch of rice cultivation, to the Khan's house in the village of Geö Gunbuz. An old red sandstone tower fluted with half columns of the same stone, and handsomely decorated with carvings in blind arches, well executed, built by Nadir for his descendants, has been repaired by the Khan and contains his family.

Khan of Kelat.

30*th September*. *Kelat.*—The Chief of Kelat came in to-day from the Atak where he had been detained by a slight brush with some Turkomans from whom his men had taken two prisoners; one of these was a Kelat man who had deserted to the enemy, and served them as a guide. His fate was sealed. The chief is a fine looking old man, quite above the average of his countrymen, intelligent, and with a rare thirst for knowledge. He has taught himself to read English, French, and Russian, and is exceedingly well informed in geography and the history of his own and the neighbouring countries, and well up in contemporary events in India, Afghanistan, and Khiva. He evinced a preference, I believe most sincere, for England and English policy, and mode of Government in the East. Knowing both our system and that of the Russians in the long annexed provinces of the Caucasus, his criticisms and comparisons were worthy of attention. Referring to the Turkomans, he said that the question had been taken in hand by the Hissam-u-Sultanah, who had perceived at once the opening given to Persia by the preparations for the attack on Khiva, and the pressure on the tribes from the Caspian; but at the very time that he had succeeded in establishing friendly relations he was removed, and his successor allowed one newly-planted colony to be attacked and destroyed by the Khan of Deregez, and later a Turkoman caravan from Merve, to be plundered within a few miles from Mashad. This had irritated the tribes to such an extent that he looked upon any connection or alliance with Persia as hopeless for some time to come. The Tekkahs of Merve looked to Afghanistan for help in the event of need, believing that they would, by an alliance with them, come also under English protection. The Khan was, I soon saw, under the impression, a very general one at Mashad, that I was charged to make some overtures to the Merves on the part of Government, and, when questioned, admitted as much. This notion, of course, I disabused him of.

Turkomans. Bad policy of present Government.

Prestige.

The immense efforts made and the large sums of money spent not many years ago, with the view of establishing an influence in Herat, have left a lasting impression in this part of the country,

and probably much further and wider than we have at present any reason to suspect. The high character then established and the influence acquired has not been lost, and would repay tenfold their cost, if at any time the course of events should bring us back to the old positions. It was a striking proof of this to find the names of officers who had served there, household words, and their justice and generosity and humanity extolled in a remote valley hundred of miles from the scene of their labours.

2nd October. Kelat.—Rode up the hills to the north-west of Geö Gunbuz to see the ruins of Nadir's palace, and a fine view, said to be commanded by a high point of the barrier. A narrow path, ascending 1,200 feet, winding up and round steep spurs composed at base of red sandstone, then to the summit of lime-stone, the lower strata hard and showing only minute particles of shells, the upper 100 feet soft and composed almost entirely of fossils; "gryphœa," with which the surface was strewn, led on to an open cultivated plateau on which stood the Imarat-i-Nadir, Nadir's palace or house, for the ruins looked more like those of a section of a suburban villa than of an Eastern monarch's palace, The site was well chosen, and commanded a fine view over hill and plain. The whole extent of the natural barrier and enclosure of Kelat, with its plateaux, mountains, and deep precipitous gorges, was visible, while to the north the maze-like ramifications of the lower spurs of the chain fall away into the Atak and the vast desert of the Turkomans, extends in an unbroken expanse to the horizon. The ruins themselves are singularly uninteresting; they consist of a line of rectangular enclosures, the largest of which, known as the Diwan Khana is about 60 feet square. The outer walls of stone and lime, the inner of brick. There being no springs on the plateau and no possibility of getting a supply by wells, a line of domed* had been constructed in the glen leading down from a hill on the west side of the barrier and the water carried by a covered aqueduct across the undulating plateau for about a mile to the buildings. Only one village, which has literally risen on the ruins of the palace, stands on the plateau. They have wells, which are slightly brackish, and reservoirs. The cultivation is entirely dependent on rain, but a good crop is generally obtained.

Imarat-i-Nadiri.

3rd October. Kelat.—Received a visit from a Turkoman of Merve, who had come to Kelat with horses to be exchanged for prisoners. He fell at once into politics, as is their habit. The Turkomans, he said, acknowledged only three powers superior to themselves. First, the Dowlut-i-Inglis, whose subjects they were prepared to be; second, the Afghans, their co-religionists; third, the Dowlut-i-Room, for which they have a traditional veneration. Of the other nations of whom they knew anything, the Persians they despised, and the Russians they feared and cordially detested. He almost admitted, however, that a sense of the inevitable might in course of time induce to submission to them. The son of Kousheed Khan of Merve was at Cabul asking for support,

A Turkoman on politics.

* *Sic* in orig., Cisterns.

but the answers he had hitherto received were unsatisfactory, the Ameer only promising to help the Turkomâns when attacked, which would, of course, be too late. A portion of the Yemoots had submitted to Russia, but were not loyal; the Chaudors near Khiva paid tribute, but those living in the desert were still free. There was no news at Merve of the scientific expedition, and no communication with the Russians or Bokhara. Since the fall of Khiva they have as much as possible avoided all intercourse with their neighbours, and there is, my visitor said, nothing that the tribe desires so much as to be left alone to enjoy the fine country they hold: they would relinquish even their plundering habits if assured of safety from attack. They have lands producing more wheat than they can consume (the price at Merve being now 2½ krans for 160 lbs. English), horses, wives, tents, and flocks, freedom from internal disorder and from crime. Houses have lately been built and gardens planted, a new feature in a Turkoman settlement, tending to show that they are not altogether the irreclaimable savages they have been described.

Merve.

Baba Sirdar of Merve.

4th October.—Received visits from Baba Sirdar, a Tekkah Turkoman of Merve, a man of some influence, and the Khan. There has evidently been a great change in the habits and mode of life of the Mervees at least. Large gardens have been planted, the young trees being brought from Bokhara across the steppes in winter, the only season it was found they could be kept alive. In two or three years the trees bear abundantly. The wealthier men have houses and also the strangers; a few merchants from Bokhara, a few from Mashad, and some others. Wine, formerly unknown to the Toorkomans, has been introduced, but appears to be sparingly and moderately used. A large quantity of brandy captured from a caravan was at once condemned by the "Ishans" (priests) and the casks emptied on the sand. The distance by which the Merve settlements are separated from their nearest neighbours contributes largely to this work of civilisation, if the change from a nomadic life to a settled one may be so termed, for it ensures the isolation produced by recent events. The submission of Khiva and Bokhara has severed the ties which bound them to the Usbeg dynasties, while immense waterless deserts stretch between them and the Yemoots and Chaudors. They are thus, as it were," driven back on themselves and shut in by the desert on a fertile oasis, which they have not much temptation to leave. Fear of Russia restricts their wandering far for plunder in the direction of the Oxus, while the necessity of conciliating the ruler of Herat has restricted their operations in that direction. The Persian border has been and is still an open field to the Toorkoman raids, and their predatory instincts are thus to a certain extent encouraged and kept alive, but the influence of Persia has been, nevertheless, not altogether unsalutary. It is by her that the Toorkomans have first been induced to settle at all and to attach themselves to the land. It has always been the policy of the best of the rulers of Khorassan (the Asaf-Dowlah and the Hissam-i-Sultanah have done more than others) to en-

Change of habits.

Isolation.

Influence of Persia.

courage any such inclination by granting lands and conciliating the chiefs with presents; though none of the settlements planted at various times in the Atak and the Sarraks plain have been maintained long, there can be no doubt their good influence is not lost, and that the present changes taking place at Merve may be directly traced to the example thus set, the new aspirations aroused and the new wants created. I gathered also from my visitors that there was an improvement in the moral tone of public opinion in the "obahs." Robbery and murder are not altogether so respectable occupations as they were, the principle men of the tribes never or rarely join a plundering expedition pure and simple. Against an enemy they of course all combine, but it is now admitted, as it never was before, that plunder is contrary to their religion and to morality. There are 14 or 15 leaders (duzdbashis), men of no influence who are professional robbers, have each distinct beats, and are joined in their expeditions by the idlers of the tribe. If these men were taken in hand and employed, the whole tribe would settle down to peaceful pursuits.

5th October.—Had a long and interesting conversation with the Khan, who is still evidently under the impression that the British Government has decided on some important measures with regard to the Turkomans and Merve, an impression due no doubt to the recent visits of British officers to these parts. To undeceive him appears hopeless. Khan's false impressions.

6th October.—To Vardeh.—Marched to Vardeh by the route already described.

October 7th.—Halted at Vardeh and ascended the Karadagh mountain, the highest peak of the great eastern branch of Alburz; the summit of the peak has an elevation of 7,870 feet, and commands a fine view of the plain of Tejen and of the eastern ramifications of the chain as far nearly as the Herat river on the one hand and of Mashad on the other. Snow lately fallen was lying on the mountain, and on all the highest points of the range. The Atok and the desert were spread out like a map 7,000 feet below. Each bend of the numerous small streams flowing into the Atok, and the belts of cultivation following their courses for many miles through the sandy plain were visible and told a tale of increased security from hostile visitations. Karadagh mountain.

8th, 9th, and 10th Oct.—Returned to Mashad by a route already described.

13th October.—Received a report that the Aksakals of the Akhal Tekkah were preparing to go to the Russian Consul at Astrabad and thence to the Governor of the Trans-Caspian Provinces, their object being to obtain the protection of Russia. If the report be true, rumours of Persian aggression have no doubt led them to take this step. It is however unlikely that it would at present lead to anything beyond diplomatic interference. The

Note.—Report false. Only four men of no great influence visited Balkhan in September by name—

1. Sophe Khan.
2. Khan Mahomed.
3. Iwaz Khan.
4. Noor Ali.

The Akhal have since thrown down the gauntlet by raiding on the Russian Yemoot Obahs.

(Sd.) G.C.N.

report comes through Russian sources, and its truth can be readily tested.

Nothing further heard of this. The Governor has arrived at Teheran without the border chiefs. (Sd.) G. C. N.

15*th October*.—It is reported that the Persian Government have under consideration a plan, submitted to them by the Governor of Khorassan, for the movement in the direction of Akhal of a force with the purpose of making them tributary, or of taking possession of their lands. A Council is to be held in the winter at Teheran, at which the Governor and the principal chiefs of the border will attend. There are rumours of the removal of the Governor from office, and his plan, if approved, would naturally secure him a new tenure of office. Merve is also mentioned as the objective point of the force, the Akhal country being used as a base. The Persians have without doubt a hankering after Merve, and are anxious regarding its occupation. To succeed in any plan for its subjection they must either have Russian help, or make much greater efforts than they have yet shown themselves capable of. The Turkoman position described as an island in the Murghab, formed by an artificial cut some 2½ miles long and 33 feet deep, must be immensely strong and could be well defended. The Serbaz, who, it is said, is unable to keep a square in presence of the Turkoman cavalry, would have but small chance of carrying such a place by assault, and a long siege would be out of the question. No Persian army could supply itself for a length of time in face of 20,000 cavalry holding the only practicable route.

16*th and* 17*th October*.—Applied to the Governor for an order to the Chief of Bujnoord, directing him to give me a sufficient guard to enable me to reach Asterabad by the shortest route, viz., across the Gurgan plain, and, as I had anticipated, found all kinds of objections and difficulties raised. An order directing the chief to give me a guard by that route, if it were safe, was offered, but was obviously of no use. As a reference to Teheran would have involved a delay of 20 or 25 days, and I was not sure to what extent Mr. Thomson would be prepared to support me in requiring safe conduct by that route, I decided that it would be inadvisable to wait, and determined to go to Bujnoord and trust to obtaining a guard from the "Eelkhanee" if possible.

19*th October*.—Received information from the border that the news of the departure of the Akhal Aksakals to Asterabad had not reached thence, and was probably untrue, but one Khan Mahomed Ataligh, of Khook Tuppa of Akhal, had returned from Khiva to Akhal, bringing with him a Khivan who had proposed to the "grey beards" of the Akhals to accompany him to visit a Russian officer who is called "Iwantoora" (whether this is a proper name or name of an office my informant could not say) residing at Khiva.* The Yeemoots of Khiva had lately raided some of the Akhal "Obahs," and carried off a number of camels and other property. An Akhal caravan on its way to Khiva had been attacked and plundered; the Akhal are preparing to retaliate.

21*st October*.—*Mashad to Kazimabad, 12 miles*.—Marched at 4 p.m. for Kazimabad; leaving the Balakhyaban gate north-west, at five miles passed the caravanserai and fort of Bahrabad. The

* Colonel Ivanof, commanding the Russian force on the Oxus.

heavy rain of the last two days had done little to injure the road. The country also showed little water, and where it was much intersected by kanats the surface was absolutely dry. The most striking feature of a Persian landscape, the contrast between the verdure and fertility of the cultivated ground, and the extreme barrenness of the untilled ground around the cultivation is, to a great extent, though the cause is not at a distance apparent, due to these "kanats" which thoroughly desiccate all the ground along their courses, and converging towards the village area deliver the accumulated moisture of the surrounding tracts into one central oasis, a magic circle of fertility. The courses of 30 or 40 kanats marked by little mounds formed of earth from the wells and gallery may be seen radiating from the lands of one village, and each of these will give an average minimum discharge of 120 cubic feet of water (at a rough calculation) per minute. Their cost, allowing an average length of 2½ miles and taking the usual calculation of 10 tomans or rupees 40 as cost of one well, and length of shaft of 10 feet depth and 60 feet length, respectively, will amount to rupees 9,000. This is, however, only the first cost. The care and labour required to keep in working order such a length of tunnel running through a light porous soil may be easily imagined; it is often necessary to support the tunnel, this being effected very ingeniously by short lengths of earthenware pipe shaped in the most approved fashion. The mouths of the wells are also often lined and covered. I had the opportunity *en route* of watching the process of clearing some of these water-courses, this being always done carefully after heavy rain. One slip and obstruction of the waterway often, I was told, causing the abandonment of a whole line of kanat, the water rising behind the slip bursting the shaft and destroying the wells.

Kanats.

Kazimabad is a small village of now 15 houses; before the famine it numbered 35, and before the siege of Mashad it was a considerable place. The villagers on that occasion followed Rujjub Bator, Mervi, one of the leading rebels on the side of the Salar, and the fort and village were destroyed by the troops of Hamza Mirza, the Shah's uncle. Rujjub was described to me as a man after the manner of Nadir, with a charmed life; at the close of a day's fighting he would open his vest and shake out several pounds of bullets that had proved a bloodless billet inside his "abba." It was the same to him whether he met one enemy or 1,000. At the close of the struggle on the day of the base surrender of the town and of the person of the Salar, he answered the summons of the Prince by placing a pistol to his forehead: better death than the disgrace of surrender! They say that the Prince would have pardoned him, and such a pardon would have carried honor and advancement with it. I had heard of this local hero at Mashad, and heard him described as a blood-thirsty butcher and mob leader. After the siege the village lands were purchased by the Malik-u-Tujjar (chief merchant) in whose family it now is. The rain at sunset turned to snow and the ground was soon white, an unpleasant warning of the near approach of winter.

Rujjub Bator rebel, a local hero.

22nd October. Kazimabad to Goonabad, 14 *miles.*— Marched to Goonabad, visiting *en route* the ruins of Toos. From Kazimabad the ruins lie 4 or 4½ miles due north. The road or track crossed an undulating cultivated tract, sloping gently down to the Kashaf rood, which it passes by a good stone bridge of the usual saddle-backed construction. Embankment and abutment are saved at the expense of convenience, and two steep ramps paved with round boulders form a serious impediment to traffic, especially in wet weather.

Ruins of Toos. There is little of interest either in the ruins or history of the city of Toos. The first view of the ruins from the rising ground south of the stream was striking, but the effect was due chiefly to landscape and sky. A long sweep of barren yellow upland rising from the stream stretched away for many miles and met the dark lowering clouds that entirely hid the northern mountain chain from sight. In the foreground the stream rolled, swollen and turbid, under the quaint high-backed bridge, while the long line of wall and the rampart of the old fort or "ark" and the great central building, the Nakara Khana or watch tower, stood out in strong relief against a dark background of saturated "plough." Under other conditions of weather the first impulse would have been to turn away disappointed, but there was an attraction in the harmony of the desolation above and around. The ruins are probably those of a city built very shortly after the Arab conquest of Khorassan. They answer exactly to the descriptions of the ruined cities of Seistan, with the same arched roofs, the same bricks, the same high ramparts and deep ditches.

There is nothing indicating an origin prior to Mahomedanism, though the Sassanian coins offered for sale in Mashad are said to be found here.

I was fortunate enough to hear on the spot the correct legend regarding the desertion of Toos. Though several times devastated by the hordes of Turan, Toos was still a fine city when the Caliph Mamoon himself struck a death blow to its existence. The hapless Imam Reza, poisoned by his order, was buried in a humble grave near the villages of Nowghan and Sunnabad, 12 miles south of the city; his body was thrown into a "sardab" or reservoir, which was built up, leaving a small arched room as a shelter for passing travellers. For many years the grave remained unnoticed and uncared for, and might have so remained to this day but for an accident, in which my informant plainly saw the finger of Providence. A deer hunted by a party of Turkomans took refuge in the archway and was plied by them with arrows till their whole stock was exhausted, but strange to relate remained unhurt, while the arrows sank deep into the solid stone work, a visible evidence of the miracle that had been wrought. The story was noised abroad and the grave visited by many people from all parts of Khorassan. The Governor of Toos ordered his own remains to be buried there and a tomb to be built. From that day the village of Sunnabad increased, the inhabitants of Toos moving over

to the new settlement, probably finding that it was better to remove at once to the spot that fashion required they should be buried in.

An inspection of the site of Toos shows very plainly, firstly, that it was of comparatively very small extent; secondly, that it was built to order and was not a chance accumulation of population. The lines of the old walls marking a nearly perfect rectangular figure with a length of two miles (roughly) and width of one. In the exact centre is a large and even imposing looking mass of ruins known as the "Nakarakhana" or alarm house, consisting of a central dome of not less than 80 feet in length, with arched wings or porticos projecting on the four sides. The form of the arches and masonry are distinctly Arab, and though not quite of the usual construction, it is likely that the building was a mosque. The name "Nakarakhana" has probably been given by the later Turk population of the valley; for the "Nakara," the great battle drum, was a purely Tartar institution.

The ark has a wide deep ditch and rampart 60 or 70 feet high. In the interior is a high keep surrounded also with a ditch and giving a good command even over the high rampart; the outer line forming a square of about 300 yards a side. At the south and north angles of the city walls are remains of detached forts, a sort of flanking defence, and the line of *débris* marking the site of buildings radiating in tolerably regular line from the central building. No coins or other relics were to be found, and the villagers of the two hamlets occupying the east and west angles of the ruins, Islameya and Shahr-i-Toos, could only point to a low mound as the grave of Ferdousi, while of the Khalif Haroon-ur-Rashid they knew nothing.

A ride of 15 miles from Toos over a rather heavy country brought us to Goonabad, a large village of 100 houses, one half the property of the shrine at Mashad, the other half held rent-free by the villagers, who are of Persian origin.

23*rd October. Goonabad to Chinaran*, 12 *miles.*—Between Goonabad and Chinaran there is a great change in the aspect of the valley; the villages are smaller and less numerous, and for the most part without gardens, but fine sweeps of pasture land sloping north to the centre of the valley, and watered by numerous springs replace the barren wastes that give such an aspect of desolation to the uncultivated, that is, the greater part of the lower valley. The difference must be mainly due to the decrease in number of kanats, which are few and far between, but also to the proximity and greater height of the enclosing mountains. About midday the sky cleared for the first time and disclosed the snow covered summits of the mountains, now near at hand, for the valley contracts to 12 or 14 miles in width. The road is sound and good, traversable for wheeled conveyance all along. The soil is chiefly a light alluvium, much mixed with gravel, and in places with kunker (nodulated limestone), of which there must be large deposits in parts of the valley from Mashad to Chinaran.

Chashma Gilass.

From Goonabad north-east four to five miles is the Chashma Gilass, a large spring issuing from the foot of a detached spur of the northern chain known as the Koh-i-Radkan, and said to be the source of the water that flows into Mashad and is used in the service of the shrine. The stream from the spring is, however, joined by a larger stream fed by numerous springs rising from the pasture about Chinaran, a mile below the village of Mirabad, the whole water is drawn off into a canal which reaches Mashad divested of all the purity of its original source. Its virtue must, therefore, be solely in imagination. The spring and some beautiful pasture, with a short close turf stretching for a mile on each side of the stream, are the property of the Hazrat (or shrine). The size of the basin, which has been called by former travellers, probably from hearsay, a lake, is disappointing, but there is no question of the purity of the water: at a depth of 12 or 14 feet every stone on the bottom is visible. The discharge of the spring, though only about half that of Chashma Ali of Shahrood, is still remarkable, and the more so that the strata, a dark blue limestone above and a purple laminated sandstone below the level of the source, are inclined, the dip being north and in the contrary direction to the flow of the spring. On the other side of the ridge, which has a height of from 300 to 800 feet, is a broad uncultivated valley sloping to the centre and draining south into the Kashaf with numerous springs at about the level of that on the opposite side. The actual source of supply must, therefore, lie high up in the mountains to the north, and at least 15 to 20 miles distant. The little village of Sar-i-Chashma adjoining the basin has a great breadth of unirrigated corn land, which, the people told me, always yields a crop; in good years the return is from 10 to 25 fold, and the grain large and good. The mixture of disintegrated sandstone rock is sufficient to give its colour to the soil, and the same rock is conspicuous at the base of the mountain for many miles, with the same condition of soil; it is probable, therefore, that the sandstone, though distinctly granular is impermeable and retains the natural moisture near the surface. On the light coloured alluvium in the centre of the valley nothing will grow without rain. Chinaran is a desolate looking village of now 40 or 50 families, and about 1,000 souls, for there are many families of men who died during the famine, and it is the custom to reckon there as one family with the head of the house. An instance was given of four families thus clubbed. In the good old times there were vast gardens and groves of chinars of which it is said six only remain.

Chinaran.

Khan's family.

I received a visit from the Khan, a feeble old man, full of the departed glories of his house. Even till recently the Khan had considerable possessions, but constant quarrels with his brother so weakened his influence that his neighbours were able to deprive him of them piecemeal.

The family is of the Zafferanloo tribe of Koords settled in the country by Shah Abbas the Great. After the expulsion of the

Koords from the Atok, the Chinaran section of the tribe settled in the upper portion of the Mashad valley and founded Chinaran. They played a subordinate part in the history of the border till the time of Mamesh Khan. This chief raised himself from the position of a petty feudal baron to the Government of Khorassan, and might even have arrived at independence. With a weaker sovereign than Fath Ali Shah, it is probable that he would have succeeded in separating Khorassan for a time from Persia. For forty years he was a very unsubmissive vassal. The possessions of the tribe then extended up the valley as far as Koochan and down to Goonabad, 20 miles from Mashad. The present Khan, his grandson, was brought up at the Court of Mahomed Shah, with whom he was a great favourite. The Shah, who fancied he saw in him much of the spirit of his grandfather, kept him in close attendance on him and away from his tribe. He used to call him playfully his "sher bacha" (lion's cub), and tell him that he could not trust him out of Teheran. The promise of the lad's youth was fulfilled, in so far that he was at all times a turbulent and unruly subject, but he had not the talent and address to fit him for a high position in the state. His turbulence led to his being no less than seven times imprisoned and heavily fined, and his quarrels with his brother, now Governor of Bam, a small valley in Jouven, gave a pretext to different Governors to deprive him of the old possessions of the family, the greater part of which have fallen into the hands of the chiefs of Koochan and Radkan. The Khan in the last great rebellion in Khorassan joined the party of the Salar, the ill-fated son of Asuf-ud-Dowlah. He was present with 400 horse and 300 footmen of his tribe in a fight between the troop of Hissam-u-Sultanah and the rebels at Jagatai in Jouven, and fled after the Salar's defeat to the hills above Chinaran. A few months later he submitted on a promise of pardon, and was present during the siege of Mashad. Since then he has been at war with, and fleeced by, successive Governors of Mashad. In spite of his evil reputation, I found the old Khan most civil and communicative. I learnt afterwards that he had locked up the public bath two days before my arrival, for fear I should ask to use it, but the incivility was fortunately one that did not touch me, for anything less inviting than a Persian village bath it would be difficult to find.

24th October. To Radkan, 14 *miles.*—Before leaving Chinaran I rode round the walls which were in as ruinous a state as the interior. A high thin mud wall with occasional towers was, even in former times, the only defence of the town, saving always the brave Koords, who must in truth have formed the ramparts that baffled the Afghans under Ahmed Shah, and withstood the attacks of the army of Fath Ali Shah for four months, enabling their chief, Mamesh Khan, in the end to obtain good terms.

The road to Radkan lies about north from Chinaran for some miles across a cultivated plain with a few villages scattered over it, and, clearing these, over fine open pasture land. Two miles from

Tower of Radkan.

the villages is a large tower of solid masonry known as the Mel-i-Radkan. A similar tower with the same name stands near the village of Radkan on the road from Shahrood to Gez on the bay of Asterabad. It may be fairly presumed that the towers have given their names to the villages, and that some clue to their history may be traced in the name. Radkan appears to be neither Turkish nor modern Persian, it is probably some obsolete word indicating the purpose of the buildings. The Cufic inscription under the conical roof of the tower is much defaced, especially on the north side, where it must be illegible.

Radkan.

Radkan is a large village of 500 houses of the Kywanloo tribe of Koords. The Khan, the head of the tribe, lives in Mashad, but had not called upon me. Attached to the "belook" or State are 10 or 12 small villages, also of Kywanloo. They have fine pastures and ample water. It was difficult to arrive at any estimate of their numbers, but including nomads it may amount to 1,500 families, giving a population of 7,000 to 8,000: these include 300 or 400 tents of nomads. From Radkan a road goes to Deregez and the Atak, said to be the only one practicable for guns. I had proposed taking that route, but found it advisable to change my plans. Having heard that the Khan of Bujnoord had been summoned to Mashad, and foreseeing difficulty in getting to Asterabad by the Attrek or Gurgan in his absence, I determined to march direct to Koochan and there ascertain the Khan's movements, visiting Deregez if possible. After leaving Chinaran I rode across the plain south-south-west to visit the old

Fort of Amirabad.

fort of Amirabad. The fort lies in an open plain with a fair command of the ground around. It is, for a Persian work, well planned, and much labour has been expended on it. The ditch is deep and wide, and well defended by a short bastion at each angle and in each face, and the ramparts thick, high, and revetted, where necessary, with sun-dried bricks. The end of the ramparts forms a rectangular figure, with two long sides and two short of 400 and 200 paces respectively; in the interior are numerous buildings still habitable arranged with much regularity, the remains of casemates or vaults for protection against vertical fire are visible. Abbas Mirza in the summer of 1832 took Amirabad after a siege of six weeks, the loss of which, considered by the Koords an impregnable fort, broke the spirit of their chief, Reza Cooli Khan, and he shortly afterwards surrended Koochan, gave up his guns, and dismantled his fortifications.

Akhloomud, stronghold of Mamesh Khan, Koord.

Fine dam.

From Amirabad a long ride of 10 or 12 miles along a stony monotonous hill skirt opened out the glen of Akhloomud, up which a path leads to a village of that name. A fine masonry dam 250 paces in length; 23 in width at top, and 50 feet in height, closes the mouth of the glen and retains the water of a small stream from the mountains. Four wells of solid masonry built with the stone work of the dam provide for the escape of flood water through tunnels at the base. Four miles above the dam through a magnificent mountain gorge lies the village of Akhloo-

mud, situated most picturesquely on the spurs of the mountains enclosing the glen. A circle of high cliffs encloses a basin, in which lies the village and a great extent of terraced vineyard and gardens; a crag within the basin is crowned by a ruined fort built by Mamesh Khan of Chinaran. The corn lands lie above the cliffs and out of sight of the village. I found here a son of Yar Mahomed Khan of Herat, a pensioner of the Persian Government, who had an assignment on the village; he is too young to have any recollection or knowledge, save by hearsay, of his father's history and importance, and has to all appearance settled down contentedly on the pittance doled out to him, devoid of pride as of ambition. From the old Ketkhuda I learnt that the dam below the village was the work of Bai Sunjoor, son of Shah Timoor, and was no longer used, the villages in the plain formerly watered by it having been destroyed in the famine. The presence of the young Afghan he strongly objected to, for he took besides his assignment a good deal that the Shah could not give him. The practice of quartering idle pensioners on a peaceful village must be bad for both parties.

Son of Yar Mahomed, Khan of Herat.

From Akhloomud to Radkan, which lies on the opposite or north side of the plain, is a distance of 15 miles.

25th October. To Jaffirabad, 27 miles.—Between Radkan and Jaffirabad is a dry barren tract lying between the head springs of the Kashaf Rood or Abi Mashad and the Koochan tributary of the Attrek. Midway on the march is a stream of water from a "karez," quite brackish. The soil is sandy and infertile, growing nothing but salt plants, thorns, and a few scattered bushes of tamarisk. The width of the plain is from 15 to 18 miles, it slopes gently up to the hills on either side, and to within two or three miles of Jaffirabad, where it is broken by undulations and low ridges thrown out by the mountains on the north. In winter snow lies very deep, and the plain is swept by a cold wind from the steppes known as the "ayesh." Jaffirabad is a small village of 30 houses of Zafferanloo, Koords, and Turks, the first in the State of Koochan. The dryness of the climate and the high winds prevalent in the winter and spring, which destroy all vegetation not protected by a covering of snow, leave the villagers dependent on their wheat crops. There are no gardens and no trees. In the famine years the wheat failed, and the village was almost devoid of families, only 30 remaining.

Plain dividing basin of Attrek from basin of Heri Rood.

Climate.

October 26th. To Koochan, 18 miles.—From Jaffirabad the country slopes gently away north and west to the Attrek stream, which rises in the mountains to the north and flows west through the Koochan plain past Sherwan, and thence passes into a narrow defile enclosed by high mountains known, as the Garmekhans, in which it flows till it reaches the Gurgan plain. With an undulating surface and fertile soil the Koochan plain bears a very different aspect from that lying at the head of the Mashad valley; the greater part of it is under cultivation. There are many fine villages and numerous camps of the nomadic clans of Jafferanloo. Cultivation also extends far up the mountain

Plain of Koochan.

slopes, which are easy and well covered with soil. Wheat is largely exported, and is carried as far as Jah Jerm, and occasionally Shahrood, Mashad, and Subzwar.

Town. The town of Koochan lies on the north side of the plain and south of the stream. Low hills with round easy slopes running out from the northern chain approach to within a mile of the walls. On the last mound is a terrace known as the Takh-i-Shah (Fath Ali Shah's tents having been pitched there), from which a good view of the town wall, bazaars, and a great extent of enclosing vineyards and gardens, is obtained. The town wall is dilapidated and the ditch filled in, no attempt having been made to restore the defences since they were destroyed by the troops of Abbas Mirza. The town itself is in a ruinous state, the result of an earthquake which happened two years ago. South of the town are the ruins of an old fortified enclosure known as the Koord Muhulla, said to have been the first permanent settlement ever made in the country. The Geraili Toorks, who held the country before the Koords were imported by Shah Abbas, were nomads, and lived, as many of the Koords do now on these bleak mountains, winter and summer, in their tents of goat's hair. West of the town a wide green fertile plain covered with villages stretches for many miles. In summer or late spring the landscape would no doubt be a lovely one. In autumn the bare low hills and brown ploughed land and leafless orchards give it an appearance of desolation which there is nothing to redeem. The Khan being absent in Mashad, and his son on a plundering party, the town was very quiet, and I entered without creating the usual stir and commotion. Europeans are so seldom seen in the Koord districts that it requires little notice to collect the people in the streets and on the house-tops in crowds. The crowds are, however, invariably silent and civil, the word "Oroos" passed from mouth to mouth in whispers showing their familiarity with the name, if not with the nation.

October 27th. To Koochan.—Rode through the town and central bazaar. The town walls, or rather their ruins, form a pretty regular square of about one mile a side; they are now much dilapidated. Having suffered from the siege, and lately from the earthquake, the town itself is more than half in ruins, the result also of the earthquake. A large solidly built Madrassah of masonry that was pointed out to me had been damaged beyond repair; the arched roofs had all fallen in, and with them many feet of the walls. The shock must have been terribly violent. No lives were lost, as there had for some time before been indications of what was coming in the shape of rumblings and slight shocks. The neighbouring villages suffered little. One, about one mile east of the town, strangely enough, not at all. The central bazaar showed a good deal of life, and the shops were well stocked and respectable looking, but the road way was the very worst I have ever seen; sloughs of mud and filth many feet deep covered with a couple of inches of water formed a succession of pools along its whole length: through these struggled lines of

Town of Koochan.

unfortunate donkeys breast deep. The few stones left of the original pavement only served as stumbling-blocks in the way, making matters worse. During the famine the townspeople suffered, but not to any great extent. They are well off as a rule, making money by the sale of wheat and fruit in Mashad. At the worst time flour was five krans per maund. 200 or 300 people are said to have died of hunger. Outside the Mashad gate a heap of stones was pointed out to me as marking the spot on which an unfortunate wretch driven to cannibalism had been stoned to death by the people. This was said to be a solitary case. The present population is reckoned at 14,000, an exaggerated estimate I am inclined to think from the size of the town and the extent of the ruins. Many families, however, still live under tents not having the means to rebuild their houses. A fine stream flows past the north side of the town, irrigating the lands on either bank as far as Sherwan, and eventually falling into the Attrek. Koochan is noted for its fruits, especially grapes, from which a very fair wine is made. In the afternoon visited Koord Dowla Khan, an elder brother of the Khan of Koochan. The old gentleman is lame, apparently from gout, and excused himself for not visiting me. The usual topic, Merve, was very soon led off by him, and I found that he had the general belief that the Russian move to Khiva was only preliminary to a further advance to Merve, which he said might become a second Sebastopol in their hands. He was very curious as to our policy, especially in regard to Afghanistan, and expressed his disbelief in the advantage of the subsidy and aid we were giving. I found that he had a very lively apprehension of Russia, and considered their occupation of his country only a question of time. Russian officers appear to have twice visited the Akhal Turkomans, who, four or five months ago, sent a deputation to Lamakyn at Krasnovodsk. The chiefs came back disappointed, and have since several times raided the tributary Yemoot settlements. The Akhal are now more disposed than they were before to look to Persia for aid, and would willingly accept lands within the hills and become tributary to the border chiefs: this is the Khan's opinion. The Koochan boundary in the Turkoman direction is apparently very well guarded, there being posts of 200 and 300 horsemen on the border. Within the border posts the country is so secure that men go unarmed to all parts. No more efficient defence for the frontier could be found than the Koord settlements, where as at present, the Persian Government is successful in both controlling and conciliating their chiefs. I gathered that the Chief of Koochan, though thoroughly dissatisfied with the Government of Khorassan, was loyal to the Shah, and believed that the faults in administration were to be laid at the door of his Governors and some of his advisers. An Armenian merchant, a native of Erivan, and the Kelanter or headman of Koochan, in company with a Turkoman Aksakal of the Akhal Tekkeh tribe, visited me in the evening. The former has been for two years in Koochan, and appears to be well treated and in a good position.

Koord Dowla Khan, brother of Shooja-i-Dowla Khan of Koochan.

Not the case.—G. C. N.

True.—G.C.N.

Once only.—G. C. N.

Borders well guarded.

Russian Armenian merchant at Koochan.

He freely admitted that his immunity from molestation was due to his being a Russian subject, which placed him in a far better position than that held by his compatriots of Persia. I have little doubt that he is a paid agent of the Russian Government, and serves as their medium of communication with the Khan of the border. After many inquiries I could not find that there was any trade sufficient to account for his presence. He himself said that he sold hardware and sent lamb skins and silk-worm eggs to Russia, but of these three articles there happens to be a most limited supply in Koochan. "Khaja Sikandar" had also visited Deregez, where there is absolutely nothing to repay him the risk and trouble. He is an intelligent man, fairly well informed and fully acquainted with the politics; if not a paid agent, he is undoubtedly a correspondent of the consul at Asterabad. A kossid in Russian pay and in the pay of the merchant at Shahrood, who is under the orders of the consul, lives at Koochan, and is constantly employed in transmitting mercantile intelligence.

28*th October*.—Awaiting reply from Khan of Bujnoord. Rode up the Zoibaran hill, nine miles north-east of Koochan. From its summit, 2,000 feet above the valley, a good view is obtained of Sherwan and lower course of the stream, and of the hilly country between Koochan and the Atak and Deregez. Behind the Zoibaran is a plateau known as the Dowlat Khana, about 12 miles wide, undulating, well cultivated and drained; eastward by a deep hollow in which lie the villages of Dowlat Khana, Kazimabad, and six or seven other hamlets. The soil of the plateau is excellent, and affords wheat crops in ordinary years of not less than 10 or 15 fold. The price of wheat at present in these villages is 6 maunds = 20 seers Indian for a kran, a very low rate for Khorassan. The steeper slopes of the hills also afford grazing for large flocks of sheep and goats. One hamlet of 30 houses that I visited had taken a wheat crop of 500 kharwars off the ground, and possessed 600 or 700 sheep and goats. The people grumbled at the amount of revenue taken from them, but it appeared not high, 10 per cent. of grain with 2 per cent. for expenses of collection, 1 kran per head on the flocks was the whole demand. Behind the Dowlat Khana plateau is a long stretch of low hills, and then a high range running from west to east with a succession of peaks known as Koh Chooeenlee, Koh Dooz, Koh Tammas, Koh Imarut. This range cannot be less than 7,000 feet high, and is fairly wooded with juniper. Beyond it lies a low range not visible, at the foot of which are the Akhal Turkoman settlements. The strata, in all parts where exposed, seem to be violently contorted, bent in double curves, and often on end and perpendicular. The rocks are all stratified—sandstones, and limestones. A dark red gritty sandstone I found to contain layers, several inches thick, of minute fossil shells, which is, I believe, unusual. On returning to the town a funeral party *en route* to Mashad, met us. They gave the news that the young Khan's party of 500 or 600 horse, which had been raiding in the Atak, had lost a couple of men in a skirmish

Wheat crops.

Koord hamlet.

Return of a Koord "Allaman."

with the Toorkomans, but had succeeded in capturing 27 of them with their horses; considered a very good booty, equal to about 1,500*l.* to 2,000*l.* in money value. Oraz Mahomed Khan, the Akhal Turkoman, visited me again in the evening, and was very particular in his inquiries as to the action that the British Government would take in the event of the Russians attacking the Tekkeh.

Oraz Mahomed Khan, Akhal Tekkeh.

I replied that I believed the Russians would not attack them if they abstained from plundering in Russian territory, or from capturing Russian subjects. This the Khan said they themselves wished to avoid, but the Yemoot, subject to Russia were at enmity with them and constantly raided their "obahs," and that it was impossible that there could be peace on their side so long as this lasted. What they wished for was the protection of a strong Government, not Persia. They were willing to live at peace with all the world, and could without difficulty restrain the professional plunderers of the tribe. The tribe had all they wanted, and wished only to keep what they had. I learned also from the Khan that the Akhal had actually entered into an agreement with the Russians at Khiva to maintain their traditional connection with Khiva to give military service when required, and to protect all Khivese subjects and caravans. Four Aksakals had visited Khiva and signed an agreement, which was, however, not altogether endorsed by the tribe.

Akhal politics.

Walad Khan and Adna Geldy Khan, Merve Tekkehs, led this party; another report says that their object was simply to obtain ransom for the Russian prisoner at Merve.—G. C. N.

29th October. Taveel, 24 miles. Marched from Koochan to Taveel on the road to Deregez, having heard for certain that the Khan of Bujnoord would not leave for Teheran till the 7th or 8th of next month (the Mahomedan), *i.e.*, 21 days. From Koochan following the stream, which is said to be a tributary of the Attrek, for a distance of about 16 miles the mouth of the defile, from which the stream issues, is reached. Several flourishing Koord villages lie on the route, and the land is fertile, well tilled, and abundantly watered. Ploughing was going on actively, and I noticed the same individual by turns ploughing, sowing, and harrowing, after the fashion of the country, *i.e.*, by driving a board to which a pair of bullocks are fastened, and on which a stout Koord finds what must be anything but easy standing over the open furrows. With a shallow furrow and light dry friable soil this primitive method is more effectual than might be supposed. On the "Dayma" or baranee lands the seed is sown broadcast and ploughed in. Thrashing was going on with the ploughing, late rain having delayed the operation. Little is grown in this part of the valley save wheat and barley. Cotton does not yield well, though it is grown; the people attribute this to the cold. Snow lies for four months, and the ice bears for two or three weeks at a time. After passing two fine villages, Hy Hy and Chalata, the village Kalla Yosuf Khan, on the border of Radkan and Koochan, is reached. The people, Koords of the Kywanloo tribe, are a fine looking set, and apparently better off than their neighbours. Forty or fifty men came out of the village to offer me entertainment with genuine hospitality, and without, I think, an idea of reward or pay-

Koochan plain.

Agriculture.

Kalla Yosuf Khan, village of Kywanloo Koords.

ment. They told me they considered their Khan's guest their guest. The men were all clothed with an under and over-coat of brown wool, home spun, trousers of the same gathered into the "Charrukh," a gaiter and boot made of one piece, of goatskin fastened by a thong passing through holes at the heel, instep, and toes. All had the comfortable tall sheepskin cap of the country, mostly brown; a few of the younger men wore white caps contrasting well with their brick-dust complexions and brown beards. They were short men, but stout and well made. I noticed a predominance of blue and hazel eyes. Although undoubtedly a Toork or Tartar race, these Koords show nothing of the Mongul type; their features are handsome, regular, eyes full and prominent, and beards ample. When saluting they raise the open hand to the forehead with head erect and a quick almost military movement, very different from the cringing bend of the Irâni and slovenly shuffling salute with half-closed hand of the Persian Serbaz. I told them that their country was a much better one than mine, and better than any I had seen in Persia, and they readily admitted that they were well off. A glance at the group of well-fed, well-clothed ruddy looking men, and around at the terraced vineyards, the well-stocked orchards, picturesque in vivid autumn tents, and beyond over a long stretch of corn land, dotted with ploughs working lustily, yellow patches of fresh threshed grain, traversed by silver lines of water from the abundant stream, made one envious of their lot, and wish that our own poor landless serfs had as fair a land in which to live and multiply. To crown all its other gifts, this favoured spot is absolutely secure from Turkoman ravages. East and west for many miles it is protected by an almost impassable range of mountains.

Defile of Tatari.

From Kalla Yosuf Khan the valley narrows, and after passing the picturesque village of Badkhor of Keywanloo Koords, the road enters a narrow defile and follows it on north-east for four miles. The defile is commanded all along, but the hills are easy and of no height. Guns have been taken through by the Persians in one of their expeditions against the Tejend Turkomans. On reaching the village of Tatari the defile opens, and there is a good stretch of cultivation half a mile wide and two or three in length; two streams come in from the low hills on the right, and the main stream divides, the valley branching west up to the Dowlat-khana plateau and east towards Deregez, from which direction it receives the Taveel stream, the most distant feeder or source of the Attrek. Taveel is a small hamlet of 10 houses of Keywanloo Koords. The valley or glen in which it is situated is bleak, treeless, and barren, the stream winds through patches of yellow marsh in a dull sluggish current, and the hills are monotonous in outline and colouring, lines of serrated ridge, brown and bare, forming a lofty unbroken impassable wall enclosing the valley and shutting it out from the world.

30*th October*. *Chapooshloo*, 21 *miles*.—From Taveel to Chapooshloo in the plain of Deregez is a march of only 21 miles (roughly calculated), but a whole day's work. Leaving the

village of Taveel and the valley the road ascends a rocky glen to the Maidan-khana Pass, 900 feet, there is then a descent of 1,600 feet to the Kibkan stream, steep and rough, and thence an ascent of 1,100 feet to the Allaho Akber Pass, the first mile very bad indeed, and a descent of 3,000 feet in three miles, and of another 1,000 feet before reaching the plain. This is the road by which the Persian guns are said to have been taken when Mahomed Shah made one of his spasmodic attempts to subdue his Turkoman neighbours. I have reason to doubt the legend, though light guns with plenty of manual labour may be taken almost everywhere. The descent from the Mydan-khana plateau at the head of that pass leads into the northern water-shed, a small stream rises in the defile, and flows through a curious natural gap in the main ridge of the north spur of Alburz known as the Derband-i-Kibkan. Beyond the defile is an open valley in which are the hamlets of Derband and Kibkan, the first village in the State of Deregez. In this valley the clan of Afshars, to which belonged Nadir Kooli Beg, shepherd and bandit, afterwards Nadir Shah of Persia, were settled by Shah Ismail Seffavi, who brought them from Azerbijan, whither they had emigrated in the track of Tartar hordes from the banks of the Jaxartes. Nadir's house in Mowlout-abad Dastjart, in the plain of Deregez, is still standing, and is known to every peasant in the neighbourhood. The Kibkan stream after passing the picturesque little fort of Kibkan, situated in what must have once been a very strong position on an isolated hill, flows east south-east down a narrow gorge shut in by stupendous precipices to the meadows of Abivert, the winter quarter of Nadir's family. Abivert or Bavert has a local reputation for surpassing fertility; mellons grown there, I was told, attain a weight of 50 lbs., and wheat returns one hundred fold.

Allaho Akber Pass.

Nadir's birthplace.

Abivert.

For many years the valley has been uninhabited. Both Turkomans and Koords have settled in it, but found it untenable. Its rich harvests were too great a temptation for plundering neighbours to withstand. The last attempt at settlement was only last year, when 1,000 families of Alieli Turkomans, immigrants from Khiva, after the Russian occupation, pitched their tents there. They were, however, removed by the Khan of Deregez, who, it appears, feared the alienation of the lands, for the new immigrants came as crown tenants. They were removed to the lands of Durgana and Kalkhan in the Atak, beyond Deregez, in which there are now 3,000 families of Turkomans, Koords, and Toorks paying tribute to the Khan.

From the Kibkan stream there is a long stiff climb to the summit of the spur and the pass of Allaho Akber. From the crest of the pass is a fine view of the plain of Deregez lying 3,000 feet below. A line of watch towers along the spur, still in good repair, show the precarious tenure on which the fertile lands are held. The towers guard every footpath, and the precipitous ridge forms the last refuge of the villagers when driven out by an attack in force. Only two years ago, in the spring of 1872, a body of, it is said, 3,000 Tekkeh horse and 2,000 footmen invaded the valley and

Insecurity.

"chapowed" or sacked the village of Chapooshloo, forcing the gates and carrying off 1,500 of the people with all their goods and cattle. The house of my host the Khan was their head-quarters for some days, and still shows signs of their rude occupation.

The descent from the pass is steep, but over an unusually good road, evidently made at some former time, and not the mere ordinary track. There is a noticeable alteration in the vegetation of the north slopes, grass takes the place of withered thorny herbage, and shrubs appear in the moist glens. The plain is green and fertile, and studded with white-walled villages, vineyards, gardens, and groups of chinars in brilliant autumn foliage. Tall watch-towers in good repair and evidently in daily use dot the plain in every direction.

Chapooshloo

The village of Chapooshloo is defended by a good wall and ditch enclosing a space of about 500 yards square. The population consists now of 1,000 families, mostly of Toorkish origin, brought over by Nadir from Bokhara. Cotton, tobacco, wheat, and barley, lucern and millet are grown, with every kind of fruit. During the bad famine years, there was little scarcity, and there were no deaths. The people had crops of grain, though small, and a great store of wheat in their houses.

31*st October.* *To Mohamad Bagh,* 8 *miles.*—Marched from Chapooshloo to Mohamad Bagh, eight miles, through vineyards, gardens, and over a well cultivated plain. At four miles the road passes through a gap in a low spur running out into the plain from the east and bending north-east and down an easy slope to the village. From the high ground the plain and village, with a belt of two or three miles of grove, garden, and vineyard, looked picturesque enough, though there was nothing in the mud walls and flat roofs to assist nature. An escort of 40 horsemen with the Khan's brother (the Khan himself being absent at Mashad) accompanied me more for show than for protection, as in ordinary times the plain is safe. The men were fair specimens of the border Koords and Toorks, short, light, hardy, and excellent riders. Their horses were all good serviceable animals, and one or two remarkably fine. A fine grey not under 17 hands, well shaped and with splendid action, was ridden in front of the party. He had lately been purchased for 200*l.* The Khan of Deregez has 800 horse in pay, and always ready either for foray or pursuit. They are mounted, armed, and paid by the Khan as a condition of tenure of his State. I was surprised to find that no more than these 800 men could be raised. The villagers have no horses and the Khan no stud. He is entirely dependent on the Turkomans for remounts. This is the case also with Koochan. A couple of thousand footmen, badly armed with matchlocks, might be raised from the villages on an emergency.

Deregez Cavalry.

Mohamad Bagh is defended by a strong outer wall on a good rampart with a deep and wide ditch. There is an inner line of wall with towers. The rampart and ditch are as usual deficient in flanking defences, but the place is altogether stronger than the forts of the country usually are.

In the afternoon the Khan's brother and son, a good looking lad of 16, came to visit me. They had been out with a party to protect the people of one of the border villages while employed in getting in some rice two miles from their village, a fair illustration of the state of insecurity of the country. The border villages, those in the Atak outside the hills, are always liable to attack, and it is even unsafe to move before sunrise or after sunset on the edge of the plain within the hills, for small plundering parties are always lying hidden in some ravine on the look-out for chance cattle or flocks insufficiently protected. At times a large body of Turkomans will scour the whole plains, shutting the people up in the forts or driving them into the hills. This may happen once every year at least. Allah Yar Khan, the present Chief, has a tighter hold on the border than his predecessors, and is on better terms with the Turkomans, but he has often to buy off his enemies, and is at their mercy if they choose to combine. The Akhal settlements can with ease bring 5,000 horsemen against any point on the border, and supplement these with 2,000 or 3,000 footmen if necessary. Insecurity of border.

1*st November.*—Rode out with an escort of 40 horsemen to visit some of the settlements in the Atak. The villages, Khairabad, Turan, and Atak, lie a couple of miles from the last low range of hills at the mouth of the pass. They are all defended by good walls with towers and ditches. A guard of armed villagers is kept at the gates, and a watch on the wall to guard against surprise, for it has happened that the Turkomans have ridden right into a village before the people had time to get to their arms. Every field has its tower to give shelter against a sudden attack, and the villagers go to their work with matchlock and sword, waiting till the sun is well up and taking care to get in before sunset. A long line of 50 horsemen passed us, each man armed and carrying a couple of bags of husked rice slung behind the saddle, so fastened as to be cut loose at a moment's notice. They were thus prepared for either fight or flight. The rice fields are 16 miles down the course of a small stream running from the plain of Deregez; there are a few towers built for protection, but no fixed settlement. The crops are as often reaped by the Turkomans as by the lawful owners. This year hardly any attempt has been made to interfere with the harvest work. The people attribute this to the Russians, who have given the Turkomans other occupation. I found myself usually taken for a Russian, and my men were everywhere asked whether I had come to pioneer the Russian force that was to finish the business and bring all the Turkomans under Russian sway. The poor villagers of the Atak would certainly accept Russian rule as a boon if it brought with it security from the constant attacks of their marauding neighbours, a security that their own Government is unable to give them. I was informed credibly that there was not a house in the 20 Atak villages that had not lost some member killed or carried off into hopeless slavery. The price for which a The Atak of Deregez.

man can be ransomed is from 25 to 50 tomans, a sum far beyond the reach of the ordinary villager.

The Atak villages pay no revenue, but they are valuable as an outer line of defence, and serve also to keep the enemy at a greater distance. Beyond these to the west are some Turkoman camps, which pay a small tribute to the Khan of Deregez for immunity from attacks, and are useful in furnishing information of projected "Allamans" and in negotiations for the ransom of prisoners.

For the first few miles from the foot of the hills the soil of the Atak. is poor and sandy. It is in many parts also saline and covered with saline efflorescence. Further out it becomes more fertile. The fertile belt extends from four or five to 16 and 20 miles, and is then lost in a sandy waste that extends to the Caspian and Aral.

3*rd November. Deregez plain.*—Rode out to the west of the valley following a small stream flowing from the range dividing Koochan from the Atak. There are numerous large villages along the course of the stream, the largest from 100 to 150 houses with an average of from six to seven souls to each house or family. This high average being evidently due to the fact that there had been no losses during the famine. Even with large tracts of "dayma" or unirrigated land yielding 10 to 15 fold crops, and only a small urban population, the produce of the plain does not more than suffice for the wants of the inhabitants. A small quantity finds its way to Mashad, but scarcely pays for portage over the difficult mountain pass. An average grain production of 400 kharwars for every 100 houses in the valley may be taken as a fair calculation; leaving a balance of half a kharwar as surplus produce per hundred houses. Allowing 2,000 or 2,500 houses as the population of the valley the surplus produce would amount to 72,500 kharwars in a good season.

Cultivation in the valley and Atak is capable of an almost unlimited increase on unirrigated lands in both, on irrigable lands in the latter. A very small quantity of silk is raised, and some cotton, tobacco, and opium, the latter for home consumption. A few years ago its use was unknown, now it is largely consumed by all classes, but more especially by the Khans and their followers. During the present month (Ramzan), a month of fasting, the day is always wound up with intoxicating doses of the fumes of this drug. In the evening I met the Khan's brother and a number of Mollahs and Khans, visitors from other places. The antiquities of the valley and of Khorassan were discussed. The famous legend of the giant tree of Turshez, mentioned in *Yule's Marco Polo* in the author's notes regarding the Arbre Sec or Seul of Polo, was related with much exaggeration and amplification. Neither this plain nor the neighbouring Atok appear to have been very ancient seats of population. The only coins found are said to bear invariably the inscriptions of the Khalifates, and the only building of any antiquity is an Imamzada with an illegible Arabic inscription.

Antiquities.

There are said to be remains of an ancient city at Abivert, but a number of gold coins found there by the Toorkomans last year are also said to have been all of the Arab period. The common Sassanian coin of Khorassan appears to be unknown as a product of the place, though recognized as Suckre coin by the Mollahs. As a central point in the battle ground of Iran and Turan, it is perhaps not surprising that the valley, though fertile, should have had no settled population.

A good deal of valuable information regarding the politics of the border may be, I found, elicited even in a rambling conversation with people who are greedy for news and will willingly hear of nothing but of things new. The Koords believe in no Turkoman virtue and condemn them—man, woman, child, and priest—as thieves capable of nothing but theft and murder.

Koords oppose good understanding between Persian Government and Turkomans.

If the Persian Government should endeavour to extend its authority over the Turkomans, its own border subjects will be found not the least obstacle in the way. As "buffers," warding off the vigorous blows dealt by the Turkomans against the shaky fabric of Iran, they enjoy liberties and exemptions that would not otherwise fall to their lot, and they are moreover aware of this fact. Nothing would be more unpopular, and if left to their conduct, nothing more likely to fail than such an expedition as that against the Akhal tribes which has been mooted in Mashad. A raid in force with the aid of Persian guns and infantry, and rewards and plunder in prospective, would offer great attraction, but not as a permanent occupation: that would be for them very exactly "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs."

Russian influence does not appear to have extended to this as a direct point of contact, but they are well known by their reputation and their goods, the latter being very generally characterised as cheap and inferior.

I saw, or I fancied I saw, an inclination to look upon their advent as a foregone conclusion, a mere matter of time. Such a speech as the following, "There will never be peace between us and the "Turkomans till the Russian flag waves over them, and then we "shall all be lambs alike," is an indication of the drift of public opinion or forecast.

There can be no doubt that each Koord chief would be a bidder for Russian favour the moment they approached near enough to permit of communication without risk to themselves. Beyond this, which is not much more than the sort of influence that England's prestige also legitimately gives her, there does not appear here to have been any actual contact or attempt at direct communication. The case of Koochan and Bujnoord may be different. They are more important and less remote.

Persian slaves from Bokhara.

4th November.—Three Persian escaped slaves from Bokhara, who had just arrived with a caravan from Merve, came to me in the evening. One of them had been captured as a boy and was now returning to his home a grey bearded man. He had left at home a father, brother, and sisters, of whom he had heard no news during his long captivity. Another was a soldier of the 6th Regi-

ment of Azerbaijan, who had been captured at the time of the defeat of the Hashmat-ood-dowla at Merve. He acknowledged with great glee that he had robbed his master before escaping and paid him off many old scores. The third was a Syud of Turbut. They were 40 days from Bokhara, and brought news that the Russians had interfered in favour of the Khan of Kokand, had punished his rebellious subjects, and occupied the place.

Probably untrue, as there has been up to date no news in confirmation. 4th June 1874.—G. C. N.

They had also built a new fort between Shura Khan and Bokhara, at a placed named Karoughly. Kara Shaitan and another Merve Tekka chief were at Bokhara in the service of the Ameer, but their tribe was still hostile. They had made a raid and carried off a number of camels from the vicinity of Bokhara at the time the caravan was starting.

Akhal raid on Russian Yamoots. An exaggeration, 10 or 12 families only were carried off.—G. C. N.

5th November.—Received a visit from a Turkoman Aksakal who had just come in from the border. I learnt from him that the Akhals had five days before "chapowed" the settlements of the Yamoots subject to Russia and carried off 50 families, who were divided as slaves among the Akhal. The settlement was within a few miles of Balkhan or Krasnovodsk. On their return journey the raiders were overtaken by a messenger from the Russians, calling on them to give up their prisoners, but refusing to give ransom. A defiant message was returned. This raid was in retaliation for a previous raid of the subject Yamoots.

Tekkah politics.

The Akhal are on bad terms with them on account of their submission to the Russians and consider them now fair game. The Aksakal was of opinion that nothing would stop his people from raiding the Yamoots and other Russian subjects but an order from the English Government, whom they consider their protector. This is the story that I hear from the Tekkah everywhere, and they probably have had some sort of promise of assistance made to them by Yakoob Khan or the Ameer. Baba Khan, son of Kousheed Khan, is said to have accompanied the Ameer to India in 1869, and to have there obtained a promise of support; also when lately sent to Yakoob Khan, he returned with an agreement from the Afghans to give the Merves support when required. From another quarter, *i.e.*, direct from Merve, I heard that he had returned with an unsatisfactory answer, the Afghans promising only guns and powder when required. This is more likely to be the true version, though the Sirdar in his troubles would not be likely to be sparing of promises.

Tekkah politics.

That the whole of the tribes are willing and anxious to put themselves under British protection is certain, and they appear to have been given reason to anticipate a favourable reception. This feeling is mentioned by Vambery, and I should be inclined to trace it partly to a tradition of the policy of the officers who were stationed at Herat, and in some measure to the communication that we had with the western tribes after the occupation of Ashurada by the Russians. Any attempts of Persia alone to control the Tekkahs would certainly meet with little success at present. Their prejudices are hostile, and their inclinations all point towards an Afghan or English connexion.

With the Russians they have lately had some intercourse. Four of their leading men have visted Balkhan (Krasnovodsk). One of them, Sophe Khan, who commanded the body of horsemen that was met and roughly handled by the Krasnovodsk-Khiva column has remained there; several agents from Khiva have visited them. From Merve two Aksakals are at Khiva negotiating the ransom of the Russian gunner captured at Merve. The tribe are as a body averse to any intercourse, but certain of them (it would, probably, not be too much to say, any of them) are always willing to go to Balkhan in the expectation of receiving presents, &c. Tekkah politics.

An English officer communicating with the Turkomans through Persia would find the Persians jealous, and the Koord chiefs absolutely obstructive unless they were bought with a big price. An officer could also not go amongst them with safety without making some specific promises, or at least being received as an accredited agent, whose presence would raise expectations that, unless further measures to control and advise the tribes were taken, might lead to the ultimate injury of the tribe and to loss of prestige by the Government that employed him. Objections to visiting the Turkomans.

6*th November*. *To Nowkhandan*, 8 *miles*.—The Khan, who has several small "obahs" of the Akhal under his influence, *i.e.* within reach of his 800 horsemen, and beyond reach of aid from their fellow tribesmen, is of opinion that the Akhal at least are well affected towards Persia, as represented by him, and that a little show of force, coupled with conciliatory measures, would induce them to submit and secure the whole Atak for Persia. He is, of course, he hinted, the only man on the border fit to carry out such a policy. It might possibly prove a harder task than it appears, but it still seems not improbable that the Akhal, at least, in spite of their loudly declared contempt and hatred for Persia, might, if properly managed, be brought to prefer a nominal allegiance and the quiet enjoyment of their lands under Persian rule, to extinction or the service of a Government foreign to them in religion, customs, and mode of administration. The solution recommends itself as feasible and less objectionable than any other. Allahyar Khan's opinions.

Marched with the Khan's son and a guard of 100 men to Nowkhandan, a large village lying some miles up the course of the Deregez stream. Leave Deregez.

Nowkhandan is the property of the Khan's two brothers, Syud Mahomed and Mahomed Khan. It is prettily situated on undulating ground between the mountains enclosing the plain to the north and a low ridge that traverses it from east to west. On a high circular mound is a mud fort which contains the Khan's residence and commands the whole village; around are extensive orchards, groves, and vineyards extending for two or three miles up and down the stream. The grapes of Nowkhandan have a great local reputation, and I found that very good wine was made and sold without the usual intervention of a Jew or Armenian to take on

his shoulders the sin of the consumer. The village has 700 houses and a population of 2,500 Toorks and Koords.

7th November. *To Duringar, 24 miles.*—From Nowkhandan the road lies up stream, following its course to the skirt of the plain, and up a defile which gradually narrows till it reaches the village Sung Soorakh, where it passes through a curious natural gap in a depression of the spur on the left of the defile and into a a second valley more open, level, and covered with fine pasture. Back from Sung Soorakh, about due north, runs a glen, up which lies an easy pass to the villages of Iskabad and Annau in the Atak. These are large Turkoman settlements and the road is consequently dangerous. The day previous to my arrival at a little Koord hamlet, on the road named Zainadilloo, its inhabitants had been attacked and three men carried off, and my escort had orders from the Khan to retaliate on the nearest "obahs" of Iskabad after leaving me at Koochan. Duringar is a collection of hamlets, four in number, on the banks of the Deregez, or, as it is called, Duringar stream. The two lying up stream are known as Duringar-i-Toorki, the lower hamlets Duringar-i-Koordi; they muster altogether about 200 Tofangchees, which would give a population of from 1,000 to 1,200 souls. The hamlets are all defended by good walls and towers, and the men always armed; being so near the border they are constantly liable to attack. I was surprised to find them very indifferent shots, some of the best marksmen in the village were collected for me, but failed after 10 minutes' fusilade in hitting a large mark at 120 yards. The rifles were heavy and supported by a forked rest, so that the fault must have been in the rifling. The fact is that although they boast of splitting bullets on a knife and such like, they know nothing of the fine shooting obtained from European rifles. If they can hit a moufflon at 50 yards and a horseman at 150 it is all they expect and require. From Duringar Koordi a pass leads to the large Koord village, Kalta Chenar, the last on the border. It is said to stand on an elevation directly over the Turkoman "obahs," and only a mile or two from them; weather permitting it is arranged to go there to-morrow. On a cloudy day it is useless. The distance from Duringar to Iskabad is about eight miles.

8th November. *To Imamgooli 20 miles.*—The day broke with a high wind and a storm of snow, the ascent to Kata Chenar was therefore useless. Marched for Imamgooli in the Koochan country. A few miles above Duringar the stream along which the road passes to that point turns west, issuing from a narrow gorge overhung by steep cliffs. Following the stream for 10 or 15 miles through the defile the large villages of Shorak and Durbadan are reached, and above them the sources of the stream.

Dawund Pass. The road crosses the stream and continues on up an open glen which narrows to the foot of the Dawund Pass, by which the plateaux of Koochan are reached. On the rest of the pass the storm came down in earnest. A cold blast from the north drove the snow in clouds before it, obscuring all save the path under our feet, and that was rendered difficult by drifts of snow collected

among the boulders through which the horses floundered with difficulty. The pass is, however, a very easy one, the gradients nowhere steep, and the hill sides soft and free from rock. A very small amount of labour would serve to open a road practicable for guns or waggons from the Atak of Deregez on to the plateau and thence to the plain of Koochan. No more practicable route exists to the east of Koochan. Imamgooli is a village of about 100 houses, situated on a hollow of a high bleak plateau, draining west into the Duringar stream. It is destitute of gardens or vineyards, but has plenty of fine corn land on the hill slopes. The inhabitants are Zafferanloo Koords under the rule of the Khan of Koochan.

From Imamgoali to Isfirji. Plateau.

9th November.—Took leave of the Khan and his party and marched with one guide to Isfirji, a large village lying buried in a rocky glen on the south face of the main range. The thermometer at sunrise stood at 5° Fahrenheit and the little stream flowing past the village was frozen hard, the swift current barely forcing its way through ice and boulders. Leaving the Zooblilig plateau the road turns south over low bleak wind-swept hills covered with snow, and gaining the crest of the pass, descends into one of the characteristic plateaux of this section of Alburz. The plateau known as Takhta or table of Katerchi has a width of five to eight miles with a length of fifteen; the central portion is tolerably level, and a great breadth is ploughed and sown with wheat. This operation is simple enough. As much seed as the cultivator has to spare is sown broadcast over the hill slope and ploughed in with a light plough to a depth of three or four inches; with favourable rain good crops are taken off such land, the seed returning 10, 15, and 20 fold. The sides of the plain are undulating and rise into low easy hills entirely bare of trees as is the central portion also. At the lower end these undulations become bolder and meet, forming a narrow defile through which a small stream, finding its way to the deep valley of Duringar, and thence to Deregez and the Atak. Crossing the Ahmuli ridge, a low ridge which may be taken to be the water-shed of this very intricate network of hills, the road enters the Dowlat-khana plateau, exactly similar in its features to the last, but wider and longer, and draining south-east instead of north-west, and eventually west into the Attrek instead of into the Deregez stream. Beyond Dowlat-khana lies Koochan. Leaving the crest of the plateau there is a descent as off the edge of a table into the deep valley of Shorazun, which names a large village lying in it and drains directly into the Koochan stream. On reaching the level of the valley the snow disappeared and a few trees began to show along the course of the stream flowing through it. The few villages in the upper part of the valley have a desolate appearance. There are no gardens and very few trees, and no crops; some wheat and barley can be raised. The people are almost entirely dependent on their "dayma" (unirrigated) crops on the slopes of the mountains. It is not till the lower end of the valley is reached that the landscape improves. A small tributary joins the main stream just about the gorge by which it reaches the

Valley of Shorazun.

Isfirji. Koochan plain, on the banks of this lies the fine village of Isfirji, which alone would make the valley worth a visit. The hill sides are covered with terraced vineyards and orchards, and the village and stream half surrounded by groves of plane and poplar. The finest fruit in Khorassan is said to be grown here, and finds its way to the market of Mashad and Subzwar; the apples, pears, and grapes were superior to any that I had seen in Persia and equal probably to the best in Europe. The village has 80 houses, many of them in a ruinous condition from the effects of an earthquake, the same that was felt so severely at Koochan. One other village only besides Isfirji suffered in the same manner, and it is on the same line, being north-west of it. The shock appears to have travelled from north-west to south-east and to have been violent only along the line of these villages and Koochan, a length of about 15 miles. The revenue paid is almost nominal, a large portion of the village being held in fief by relatives of the Khan of Koochan. The wheat lands of the glen are said to be particularly productive, the price (within reach of a market at Mashad) being 35 lbs. of wheat per kran = 10*d.*

Durbund-i-Hissar. 10*th November. Sherwan, 24 miles.*—Marched to Sherwan across the plain of Koochan. A short two miles beyond Isfirji in a narrow pass known as the Durbund-i-Hissar through which the road and the small stream from the Shorazun Valley debouche on the plain. On both sides of the pass are precipitous heights, those on the right named the Dagh-i-Shah, Shah Abbas Safavi having ascended the highest point to obtain a view of the plain. It is about midway between Koochan and Sherwan, commanding a fine view of both and of the whole plain from Jafirabad to Chinnaran on the Bujnoord road. The summits of the Mirabad or Nishapoor range are visible to the south-east, completing the circle of mountains in that direction, and to the west the valley leading up to Bujnoord is closed by the snow-clad ridge of Koh Salig. South-west across the plain is the Koh-Shah-Jehan, the south spurs of which stretch out into the Jouven Valley. Clearing the pass the road strikes

Sherwan plain. across the plain, which at this point has a width from the lower slopes of Shah Jehan to the fort of the Dagh-i-Shah of about 20 miles. The hill slopes running for 30 miles into the plain afford fine pasturage, and are in parts ploughed up for ("barani") rain crops. The central portion through which flows the Koochan stream is thoroughly well irrigated, and has many large village, gardens, and vineyards. A marked peculiarity in the landscape is the circular flat-topped mound to be seen near each large villages. These mounds are from 50 to 100 feet in height with a diameter of 100 to 200 yards. These may have been either forts or the sites of Guebre fire-temples. The people could give no account of them further than that they had heard tell that they were built by Rustum as watch-towers at the time of Afrasyab's invasion. The town of Sherwan lies on the right bank of the stream 30 miles from the southern mountains. A high mound in the centre of the town is visible from 10 miles. Large gardens and vineyards lie

to the north and west. I was received and hospitably entertained by the Naib (Lieutenant) Governor, a Mengbashi (head of 1,000) of the Khan.

11*th November.* *Sherwan.*—Halted at Sherwan. Received a visit from the Menghashi, a very intelligent communicative official. His hospitality was spontaneous, for he had had no orders from the Khan, who is still absent, to entertain me. I gathered from him a good deal of useful information regarding the town and the state of the country. Sherwan is situated at the lower or west end of the plain of Koochan, within three or four miles of the hills, bounding it on the south, to the north the plain stretches away for 15 or 20 miles, the enclosing hills in that direction are low and of less bold outline than in other parts of the range. Several good roads lead over them to the Atah or plain, distant 30 miles. The main road debouches at Yang-i-Kalla, and is said to be passable for guns, but not easier than the road between Deregez and Koochan. Ten miles from the plain is a plateau known as the Koosh-khana on which are 30 villages, the largest Khairabat. Koosh-khana plateau.

The people are Koords, Turks, and a few families from Mehna, one of the old towns, formerly large and populous, the ruins of which are said to cover a large extent of ground near Yang-i-Kalla. The Mehnais were and are still Sunnis, and were in possession at the time of the Koord occupation. They were gradually forced out of the plain by the pressure of the aggressive Turkoman tribes. I was unable to obtain any information as to the origin of these former occupants of the Atak. They are known now only by the names of the towns they occupied, Annauis Iskabadis, Mehnais, as the case may be. They were probably immigrants or invaders from Turkistan subsequent to the Tartar conquests, whence their distinction from the other Toorkish tribes of Iran. The plateau of Koosh-khana has a population of 3,000 or 4,000, and furnishes 300 well mounted horse and 100 to 200 riflemen. Beyond the plateau are the larger villages of Feroza and Gurmab, each with 80 to 100 houses in strong positions within a few miles of the border. Mehna.

The town of Sherwan has 1,000 families, all Toorks of Gerayli-tribe, who formerly held the whole country from Gurgan to Kelat. The Jellayer of that place, the Boguiray of the north villages of Jouven, and the Beiat of Nishapoor and other parts, are sections of the same tribe. They have mixed and intermixed with the Koords who were settled among them by Shah Abbas. There is now no distinction in language or feature. The greater part of the population is engaged in agriculture, there being but a small proportion living by trade or handicrafts. A few carpets are made, and a good deal of the coarse silk stuff known as Allahji-bafi chiefly by the women for home consumption. The streets of the town are wide, well paved, and tolerably clean, and its appearance is altogether more inviting than that of Koochan, the earthquake that devastated that place two years ago having been scarcely felt here. Gerayli Toorks.

The walls forming an irregular figure of six sides with a circuit of 1½ miles are in fair repair. The rampart has a height of about 25 feet with base of 15 to 18 feet, and a screen wall of good thickness, Defences of Koochan.

but without any ditch. The mound in the centre commands the ground all round, and is large enough to form a good position. It would add very materially to the strength of the place.

Climate.

The water-supply is good and ample, and the climate is considered by the people the best in Khorassan, and therefore in Persia; there are occasional visitations of cholera, sometimes of extreme severity. During the famine the people did not suffer, but many hundreds who collected from other parts died in the town. At that time grain was selling at 4 krans per maund (7 lbs.); it is now 5 maunds or 35 lbs. per kran; a considerable quantity of wheat is exported to Meshed. Two or 300 of the townsmen, 40 or 50 mounted and armed with the "Shamkhal," a long heavy rifle, the rest with the "Khirli," a lighter piece, carrying a very small ball about 30 to the pound up to 200 yards with great accuracy, are in the pay of the Khan, and serve on the border when required. They receive 6 tomans = Rs. 24 per annum, and two kharwars of grain per annum. The regular horsemen armed by the Khan receiving from 10 to 30 tomans, and the same quantity of grain. Koochan with its two considerable towns, its fertile land and large and flourishing population, is altogether the most important of the border states. It is said to have 440 villages, probably an exaggeration. Those in the plain may number 80 to 100, and the hill skirts and mountains may have 50 or 60 more. The population is said to be 40,000 houses and tents, which, calculating five to a house, would give 200,000, probably not much over the mark, for the towns are populous and many of the villages large. They have also not suffered from the famine, the most striking proof of that being a large number of children of all ages. In other parts of Khorassan it is rare to see a child of more than two or three years of age. A nominal revenue of 40,000 tomans per annum is paid to the Shah, but a portion of it is returned as pay of border guards. The Khan maintains 1,000 horsemen mounted chiefly at his expense.

Prices.

Irregulars.

12*th November*. *Chenaran*, 22 *miles*.—Marched to Chenaran. On leaving the gate of the town a sheet of bare rock on the hill side to the south gives a very good representation of a tiger, whence the name Sherwan. The Bujnoord road turns out of the valley at about three miles, passing over a low spur, and a fine plateau known as the Hazar Jareeb, whence a long but easy defile leads into the Bujnoord plain. There is an alternative road leading straight down the valley and through a pass closed by the mud fort of Rezabad, built by Reza Guli Khan, the rebel Eelkhani of the Zafferanloo, in the time of Fath Ali Shah, into the Germekhas valley, whence it strikes across a very difficult looking broken country westwards to Bujnoord. This road is used but not frequently. Caravans and troops always choose the first mentioned. The pass and the descent into the bed of the stream draining the Hazar Jareeb plateau would be an obstacle to guns, but it is turned by a route which, leaving the village of Zobaran at the head of the plateau, passes for some miles over a low ridge broken only by easy undulations, and descends into the Koochan plain

Gun road.

over the village of Mushtarji and joins the main road from Sherwan at Parez, a large village eight miles distant from that plain. Six field guns of the Shah's escort were driven across the pass without difficulty. Two and a half miles from Sherwan is a fine spring, known as the Kara Kazan spring, and considered by the people the source of the Attrek; the main stream being dry in the summer. There is a higher permanent source about 15 miles north-east, draining the Khoos-khana plateau and joining the Germekhans stream at Mana, 30 miles north-west. From the summit of the Koh-i-Ajab, 10 miles north-west of Sherwan and 2,000 feet above the level of the valley, a fine view is obtained of the Koochan and Bujnoord plains, of the watershed of the Attrek as far as the last height skirting the Gurgan plains, and of all the principal peaks of the eastern Elburz. Source of Attrek.

13*th November*. *Bujnoord*, 14 *miles*.—Marched to Bujnoord. Leaving Chenaran the Bujnoord road follows a narrow well cultivated glen known as the Germekhans-i-Chenaran. The hills on either side are of chalk and coloured loams, low, and easy of access. At a few miles from the village the road turns out of the glen over long undulating downs, and the stream disappears in a narrow gorge leading to the Germekhas valley, which it enters eight or nine miles further north-west. From the crest of the downs the plain of Bujnoord is opened to view. The town standing in the centre of the plain is small, almost destitute of the gardens and vineyards which give so picturesque an aspect to the towns and villages in Deregez and Koochan. From north to south the plain has a length of about 20 miles and width of 8 to 10. It is drained by a small stream which passes through a high range of hills dividing the plain from the Germekhans valley. Thirteen villages are visible along the course of the stream, and on the hill skirts, of which two or three only are of considerable size. The lofty rugged peak of Aladagh and a massive looking mountain known as the Koh-i-Turgan or Salig close the view to the south, beyond them lie the Jouven and Jagatai valleys. At a short distance from the town I was met by the Khan's Mustaufi and an "isticbal party," and conducted to quarters in a very handsome building, with some fine rooms decorated in the Persian style with plaster, gay colours, and carved wood work. In the afternoon I saw the Eelkhani, Yar Mahomed Khan, a stolid looking man with very little conversation and a great capacity for consuming spirits, which he drank undiluted out of a large champagne glass. He gave me some particulars about the Russian movements on the Attrek, and was very anxious to know what course the British Government intended taking with regard to Merve, the invariable objective point of every line of conversation. The Eelkhani's reception room was very handsomely decorated in the Persian style, and a great display was made of silver plate, and large water pipes with massive silver heads were introduced, and eight persons brought in to account for their display. Under ordinary circumstances one suffices for a whole company, but it was evidently Bujnoord Plain.

intended that I should carry away a correct impression of the substance and wealth of the Lord of the tribes.

The whole of these, besides tea and dinner services which I afterwards saw, were, I heard, presents from the Russians, and they certainly were not Persian.

14*th November.* *Bujnoord.*—The Eelkhani and several of his principal officers visited me. The position of the Russians on the Attrek was touched upon, and the chief deplored the cession to them of the Attrek boundary. It brought them, he said, to his border, and, in the event of hostilities, his people would be the first to suffer. Many of the Yamoots, formerly on the Persian side of the river, have threatened to go over to the Russian side, and would do so if the Persian Government were to attempt to take possession of the country up to the Attrek. I could not learn that this would be any disadvantage to the Koord chief, except as depriving him of one pretext for keeping up a large band of professional robbers, who add to his importance, while supporting themselves at the expense of their Turkoman neighbours, who in turn prey on the defenceless Persian subjects of the southern districts and of Mashad. The Goklan refugees from Khiva settled at Karakalla, a fort on the Ab-i-Sunt, tributary of the Attrek, about 60 miles north of Bujnoord, said to number 1,000 families, have made overtures to the Eelkhani, and will, he says, make use of him if pressed by the Russians or the Tekkah. Meantime they pay no tribute. The Goklan tribe, governed by an officer, one Hoosein Beg, appointed by the chief, appear to be in good order, and to pay their tribute regularly. They are in a state of constant hostility with the Yemoots and the Tekkah, and are greatly dependent for protection on the Shahdillo or Bujnoord Koords They can turn out 300 to 400 horse, said to be well armed and mounted. Colonel Markosoff was joined in his attack on the Tekkah at Kyzil-Arvat by them, and repaid their services with a portion of the plundered cattle of the Tekkah.

Karakilla.

Goklans.

Attrek route impossible under Persian protection.

The Attrek route from Bujnoord to Asterabad appears to be quite impracticable, at least from the Persian side and under their protection. For 50 miles there are no villages, and the wilderness, it is by no means a desert, is constantly swept by large "Allaman" of Yamoots and Tekkah, *en route* to the Goklan settlements, or the border districts of Khorassan. A thousand horsemen would hardly ensure safety. Caravans pass occasionally by travelling at night, and with great expedition.

I see little hope of prevailing upon the Khan to assist me in the matter, the letter with which I was furnished at Mashad imposing no obligation on him, and in fact leaving the question of routes so open that I decided to withhold it, and trust rather to negotiation and the good-will of the chief. There can be little doubt that a guard of 100 or 200 men would ensure safety, but there would still be some risk, and it is hardly to be expected that the chief, however, well disposed, will take that risk without any compensating advantage to himself. It would be more prac-

ticable perhaps to reach the Attrek from the Akhal Turkoman side, though still difficult, and perhaps impossible, for the Tekkah are at open war with the Yemoots, who are in possession of both banks of the Attrek. A British officer visiting the Tekkah as such, and on the part of his Government, would no doubt be well received, and they would probably be able to pass him on to the Yemoots in spite of the present hostilities; but there would be risk of detention for ransom in the hands of the Yemoots, a risk certainly not decreased by the fact of their nominal submission to the Russians. Such a visit to the Tekkah, moreover, would be open to a grave political objection; for it would convey an assurance to them, which Government would be very unlikely to endorse, and which could not be explained away to the satisfaction of the ignorant and unsophisticated nomads. In their present situation a friendly visit could only be received by them as a distinct avowal of sympathy and pledge of protection, which no amount of sophistry could place in any other light. The Eelkhani left me with a promise that he would see me again, and a hint that he would prefer that the meeting should be in private.

Objections to following that route under Turkoman protection.

In the afternoon a number of Akhal Tekkahs paid me a visit, an official visit they said to an officer of the Government they have elected to consider their natural protector! Among them were three or four old men, guests of the Eelkhani, who had come to negotiate the ransom of some prisoners of their tribe taken by the Shahdilloo.

After asking me if the British Government intended to accept their repeated offers of allegiance made through the Ameer of Cabul they proceeded to explain the situation in which they are placed. On one side they have the Koords and the Persian Government; the former, as they say with some truth, living by plundering them; the latter always hostile and ready to support the border chiefs without enquiry. It was, they said, impossible for them to come to terms with a Government they could only reach through the medium of the very men interested in preventing anything like a good understanding. On the other side, within reach of their camps, were the Yemoots, of late very hostile, and always able to rely on the Russians or the Caspian for support. Between these two fires my friends evidently felt themselves in an untenable position, and would gladly find a road out of it. They are swayed by two conflicting emotions—fear of Russia and hatred of Persia—which of the two is the more powerful it is difficult to say, but the Turkoman has the reputation of being cool and calculating, and though led to some extent by sentiment, is not incapable of appreciating material advantages; a kind and conciliatory policy weighted with tangible advantages, such as immunity from plunder, security of tenure of their lands, and from foreign interference, might outweigh in the balance traditional dislike and contempt. In any case the experiment would be a safer, more humane, and cheaper one than that said to be under consideration, namely, the subjection of the tribes or

Akhal views of their present position.

the occupation of their lands by force of arms. Towards Russia both sections of the Tekkah tribe are ill-disposed, the feeling appears to have its origin partly in traditional religious prejudice, and partly in fear aroused by hostile contact. The Akhal Tekkahs have twice felt the power of the Russian arms. The Krasnovods. Khiva column gave a party of 1,000 of their horse a severe lesson, killing and wounding 100 of their number, and about the same time the Chekishlar column attacked them near Kyzil Arvat and destroyed several obahs, carrying off cattle and camels. In spite, therefore, of their loudly declared hostility, the Tekkah are thought by some who know them best to be not very far from the submission that results from fear and a sense of the inevitable.

They are already beginning to look at the baits held out to them from the Caspian and Khiva, and it seems possible that a little more pressure and a little cajoling will bring them to terms. My visitors themselves declared that they would never submit, but were prepared to give up their lands and fly to Merve, and thence, if necessary, to Afghanistan, but the time has not yet come for them to decide, and as in their relations with Persia, so with regard to Russia, it is probable that mere sentiments will give way to more material considerations. I learnt that Sophe Khan of the Akhal, who had commanded the band referred to above as having been defeated by the Krasnovodsk column, was in friendly communication with the Russians, and had visited General Lamakyn at Kyzil Soo (Krasnovodsk). He had lately returned thence bringing a demand from the Russians for the release of some families of Yamoots, Russian subjects, carried off by the Akhal, with many promises and threats. Sophe Khan has little influence with the tribe, and no reply was sent.

Difficulties in the way of following either the Attrek or Goorgan routes.

15*th November*. *Bujnoord*.—Visited the Eelkhani and had a long conversation with him relative to routes. That along the Attrek was, he declared, absolutely impracticable. He was on bad terms with the Yamoots, and could not send his men among them or open communication with them. It would require the Shah's army to render the route safe, for the tribe was powerful, and at this season in great force on the Attrek. Friendly communication was only possible from Asterabad or through the Russian settlements, where one tribe, the Jaffir Bai, had become peaceable subjects. Putting these excuses down at a very low value, I saw that there was still little hope either of obtaining a guard from the chief or of using him as a medium of communication with the Yamoots. It was not his interest to assist me in the matter, and I could bring no pressure to bear upon him. The Gurgan route which I also suggested in the hope of getting from that place to the Attrek was, he said, safe as far as Goorgan, as he could furnish a sufficient guard; but thence the Yemoots held a good deal of the road, and were decidedly unfriendly both towards his men and the Goklans, whose "obahs" also intervened. Either would hardly be able to give me a friendly introduction to the Yamoots. Seeing no prospect of obtaining the assistance I required, I requested the Khan to give me a written acknowledgment

of his inability to comply with my request for guards on the Gurgan route. This produced some hesitation, and he desired me to wait till the next day when he would have reports as to the state of the roads. This I of course agreed to. With reference to the rumour that the Persian Government had made over the Attrek Yemoots to Russia, I learnt that there was a certain amount of foundation for it. The Russian Governor, Lamakyn, had visited Asterabad and conferred with the Governor, Suleyman Khan, and had suggested the transfer of the Yamoots, but being met by refusal had referred to his own Government and there the matter rested. The Yemoots live for the most part on the Russian side, and cultivate lands on the Persian, paying tribute to neither party. With regard to Tekkah politics I found the chief of opinion that it was necessary for the Persian Government at once to take some measures to secure them, and also believed that conciliation was the most advisable policy, and he himself the best man to carry it out.

Lamakyn's visit to Asterabad.

Eelkhani's opinion on Tekkah question.

17*th November.* *Bujnoord.* — Further news regarding the security of the roads being, as the Khan pretends, unsatisfactory, he has sent me the required acknowledgment of his inability to give me guards by the Gurgan route; sending me also the customary present of a horse which I declined to receive. Not that I had any great cause to complain of his conduct, for he had acted throughout, with slight exception, with the greatest frankness, and could hardly be expected under the circumstances to comply with my requests.

It would have been, I believe quite possible without the chief's assistance to obtain safe conduct either with or without payment from some of the Turkomans at Bujnoord, and I might have visited both the Akhal and the Yamoot, but the difficulties increased on a nearer approach, and having been left a clear discretion by Mr. Thomson, I deemed it advisable not to make the attempt. By accepting their hospitality or even travelling amongst them, I should have confirmed the Turkomans in the belief, which I found they already had, that I had come charged with some mission to them, or that my Government was prepared to sympathise with and assist them against their European enemy. Every man of them held the commonly entertained idea of the rivalry between the two Governments, and the appearance among them of a British officer would have been almost equivalent to the holding out a distinct pledge of assistance. It seemed to me to be quite beyond my instructions and the object of my journey to appear in the character of an envoy or accredited agent among the tribes, and as their guest I could only have appeared as such. The gain too seemed to me comparatively trifling. I was already well informed as to the position and foreign relations of the tribes from intercourse with the people themselves, and had acquired a fair knowledge of the geography of the upper Attrek and Akhal.

Objections to appearing amongst the Turkomans, and accepting their hospitality at this time.

The language of the Turkomans themselves and their anxiety for recognition, if not assistance, from the British Government

showed me in what light a visit from me as their guest would have been considered. As a guest of the Persians, and through their assistance and mediation I might have gone, or as a traveller, not known to be a Government officer and on the business of Government.

18*th November.* *To Shoughan.*—Marched to Shoughan on the road to Jah Jerm and Bostam, a village of 100 houses of Shahdilloo Koords, with large gardens and a great extent of unirrigated wheat lands giving good crops. This year the harvest was exceptionally good, and consequently wheat is selling at seven maunds per kran.* In the worst year of the late famine the unirrigated lands gave a crop sufficient to maintain the population and a good many of the famine-stricken inhabitants of the less fertile valleys to the south.

For the last two or three years also, though situated within a few miles of the passes through which the Turkoman "Allamans" constantly pass, the village has enjoyed a certain amount of immunity from plunder. The people attribute this partly to the good arrangements of the Khan, but chiefly to the fact that the Russians have kept the Tekkah and Yemoot tribes employed in other directions. They are full of gratitude to the latter, and declare that they would be glad to see them come and complete the good work by taking the country. This is a sentiment I have heard expressed in various places on the border, and is natural enough. There can be no doubt that the rural population everywhere would welcome a strong government without respect to creed or race.

Feelings of rural population towards Russia.

Aladagh.

From the Bujnoord plain the road crosses a low pass, and thence bends from south to west between two grand masses of mountains connected by a low narrow ridge over which it also passes. The mountain to the right or north is known as the Aladagh or the "piebald mountain," a name very commonly applied to mountains high enough to retain patches of snow late into the summer. The southern mountain is as high as, and a greater mass than, Aladagh. The north face for about 1,800 feet was thickly covered with fresh fallen snow, and is well clothed with juniper of fair growth. To the east of the peak and about 16 miles south of Bujnoord is a deep cleft, with precipitous sides rising to 1,500 feet above the valley known as the Siahkhana, through which lies the direct road to the Isferayin valley, and thence to the Jouven and Nishapoor plains. To the east of the pass again the ridge falls away, and is crossed by a second and easier pass six or eight miles from the Siahkhana. Thence it rises again joining the high range in which lie the plateaux, Buguiri, and Sultan Maidan. The principal peaks, Shahjehan and Takht-i-mirza reach an elevation of 7,000 to 8,000 feet. Bending from south to south-east beyond Koochan this range runs past Mashad through Bakharz towards Herat.

Leaving the baggage to follow the easy road over the low ridge connecting the two mountains, I ascended the peak of Aladagh known as Baba Buland. The ascent was steep and difficult, the

* Equal to about 42 lbs.

path being frequently obstructed by deep drifts of snow through which our horses struggled with difficulty, but the view from the summit well repaid the exertion. To the east the mountain falls abruptly into a glen which carries the drainage of its east slope and of the north slopes of the Salig mountains into the Bujnoord plain and into the Germekhans, tributory of the Attrek. To the west it continues in a high unbroken ridge dividing the drainage basins of the Attrek and Gurgan for 50 to 60 miles, where it is lost in the fertile plain dividing the two rivers.

The slopes at the base of Aladagh are formed of a coarse gritty sandstone, overlying which to the summit are strata of grey limestone showing a few impressions of ammonites. The strata dip at a sharp angle to the north, and the south face of the mountain descends in bold spurs. The aneroid marked an ascent of 4,600 feet, which would give the mountain an elevation of 9,000 feet above the sea, a bitterly cold north-west wind sweeping the bare mountain top, baffled all attempts to obtain a reading of the boiling point.

Shah Abbas's road to Caspian.

In the days of the Safavian Kings the royal road from the Caspian provinces across the Gurgan plain led up the Showghan valley. A wide road clearing the Gurgan pass or gorge 50 miles lower down the valley is now said to be covered with impenetrable forest, and two ruined hostels known by tradition as the Rabat-i-Ask and Rabat-i-Karaguez only remain to bring the past into contrast with the present. From Showghan to the plain and many miles beyond there is no sign of human habitation. The evergreen and fertile meadow lands, the produce of which would suffice to save a whole district from famine, form the neutral ground between plundering Turkomans and Koords, and thus it is with all fairest valleys of Khorassan.

19*th November*. *To Sangkhas*, 18½ *miles*.—Marched to the village of Sangkhas or "Chardeh" so called from its being the principal of a group of four villages. The other three villages are Andigan and Jurbat in the plain west of Sangkhas, and Khoda Shah to the north. A fifth village, Kofr, lying at the mouth of the pass from Bujnoord, belongs to the groups. Sangkhas and the three first mentioned villages lie well out in the plain not less than 10 miles from the pass. To the south, distant four to five miles, is a low ridge, beyond which lies the plain of Jouven, east and west is an almost unbroken level waste as far as Nishapoor on the one side and Bostam on the other. The village lands of a light coloured but rich loamy alluvium are well watered by a small stream flowing from the Hissar (Bujnoord) pass. The water of the stream in common with all the water of the plain is brackish, but serves for irrigation, and is not undrinkable even to those unhabituated to its use.

Decrease of population.

For more than a mile round Sangkhas the ground is covered with remains of ruined houses and walled gardens. On inquiry I found that the evident decrease in population was not due to the famine, for it had fallen lightly on these villages. The fine

springs forming the source of their water-supply had not been materially affected by the three years' drought, but had continued to yield sufficient to irrigate the village lands and to support the population. The true causes are obscure. Within the recollection of the predecessors of the present oldest inhabitant, from whom I received the information, Sangkhas numbered 750 houses, it has now only 200; numerous kanats (under-ground water-courses), almost all traces of which are now obliterated, supplemented the supply from the stream. This decline may possibly be attributed to a long period of neglect, misgovernment and insecurity, but these causes alone seem insufficient. For ten years the people have enjoyed absolute immunity from Turkoman ravages and a light and fixed revenue demand, but there has been no proportional increase in cultivation or population. Deficient water supply would alone suffice to produce the results visible, and the deficiency may be attributable either to a decline of industry or to actual decrease of rain-fall. The latter has not been observed and is not admitted, but the former is disproved by the aspect of the people, of their dwellings and their fields, and the evidence of care in husbanding and distributing the available supply of water.

The revenue demand of the village fixed for an indefinite period and but little liable to enhancement, was, I found, 1,000 tomans, which was admitted to be not more than 10 per cent. of the net value of produce. None of the customary exactions are suffered by the Elkhani. The corn lands are productive, but only sufficient is raised for home consumption, a great breadth of land being reserved yearly for cotton, which finds a ready sale in Shahrood for the Russian market, the price now paid on the spot being 25 krans=Rs. 10. per maund. Much attention is also paid to sericulture: large quantities both of raw silk and silk-worms' eggs go to Shahrood for export to Europe and the Russian provinces. The people of Sangkhas and the minor villages are, according to their own account, Uzbegs, brought from Bokhara at some long forgotten period, probably by Mahomed Shaibany, who is known to have transferred a number of Persians to Bokhara. They number 1,000 houses, and though known as Uzbegs, are now undistinguishable in feature from the Ajam or Persians and the Koords and Toorks with whom they have mingled.

Koh Buhar.

An ascent of the Koh-i-Buhar, a few miles to the west of the route, afforded a fair view of all the principal passes used by the Turkomans as far as Nardin, distant about 20 miles. The main chain of the Alburz is for that distance broken into low disconnected ridges, between which intervene wide expanses of ravine cleft pasture lands.

Defence of border.

Nothing but a line of strong forts at short distances would suffice to protect the border on the interior line, but the outer line of mountains or Koh-i-Atak is much more connected and difficult of access, and it is probable that a few well placed posts would cover the whole of the interior and fertile mountain tracts. Such an undertaking could only be

carried out by the Shah's Government; the border chiefs are powerless, even if they had the wish, to do more than return, as they appear to do with interest, the blows struck at them.

Beyond Nardin the ridge rises again and continues in an unbroken line westward. The Buhar ridge has the same geological formation as the Jagatai mountains on the south side of the plain. Trap rocks predominate, and the dark rich soil afforded by these supports a more than ordinarily luxuriant vegetation. The "dayma" or unirrigated wheat crops on the mountain slopes were particularly praised. The yield being 10 to 15 fold more than in other parts. On the base of the mountain a few granite boulders indicated the existence of a solid base of plutonic rock underlying the whole range. The north slopes showed limestone and traps of various colours and texture worn down into easy slopes, the summit and eastern slopes, for 1,500 feet, a close grained slaty sandstone with indistinct impressions of fossil shells and very distinct ripple marks on the cleavage surface. Below the sand-stone was a stratum of some 100 feet of porphyritic conglomerate, underlying which and facing the lower slopes of the mountains were the mottled clays and marls of the brightest colours in juxtaposition, which give so picturesque an aspect to the lower slopes of the opposite range. A good deal of talc was mixed with the clay, and beds of pure white gypsum, much used by the villagers, were frequent. Trap rocks—amygdaloids and trap tuffs—showed everywhere, and all the boldest and most precipitous spurs were composed entirely of it. On the bare slopes of the mountains to the east the same arrangement of rock was apparent. Dark seams of trap rock lying between gray and purple sandstones and mottled marls, and crowning low projecting spurs of red and ochrous clays. Copper and lead are said to have been found on Buhar, but never worked. Of the presence of the former there were numerous indications. The highest ridge of the mountain rises to about 7,000 feet.

Trap rocks.

"Dayma" land.

Copper.

20th November. Jah-Jarm, 20 miles.—From Sangkhas to Jah-Jarm is a distance of 20 miles over a level plain. The soil a light alluvium, highly impregnated with salt and but scantily covered with the usual herbage of such lands, dwarf mimosa and salsola of various kinds. Save two or three small springs at the foot of the hills, distant three or four miles to the right, there is no potable water. The mounds of ruined kanats here and there prove the existence in former times of villages, but the waste is now abandoned to the "Gorkhar" and gazelle and the Turkoman raiders, who have been probably the main instrument in reducing it to its present state. The four passes most used by the "Allamans" lie to the right of the route. They are watched closely, but the post can be turned by many foot-paths leading through the mountains, over which the active Turkoman horses find little difficulty in scrambling. The posts also are never strong enough to oppose the passage of the enemy. The two or three horsemen told off for the duty only venturing out after sunrise, when they are assured the coast is clear to search for

Desert plain.

Inefficient defence of border.

tracks along the practicable paths. If fresh traces of the passage of horsemen are found, a signal fire is lighted, the smoke of which warns the villagers below to betake themselves with their cattle to the nearest fort.

The whole route as far as Jah-Jarm is dotted with small cairns marking the spot where some unfortunate has lost his life in the attempt to defend his property or his liberty. For many months past, however, the road has been as safe as roads in Persia usually are. Small parties of thieves lurk about the hill skirts, but the extensive ravages of former years have ceased. Between the Koh-i-Buhar and Koh-i-Chakab which lies to the west is the easiest and most used pass leading from the Rabat-i-Ask in the Sooghan valley. It has a spring of water which enables the raiders to make the distance to the Alhaq spring on the high road of Khorassan, over 40 miles, in one stretch. Beyond the Koh-i-Chakab, which is steep and rugged, and rises to 2,000 or 3,000 feet in height above the plain, is a long low ridge known as the Tangah over which are three easy passes, the Gulbini, Tang-i-Gazi, and Godar-i-Kohsar; west of the ridge the fort of Jajarm and a lofty mountain to the west of the fort close the road for many miles.

Danger greatly decreased.

Turkoman passes.

Jah Jarm is a small straggling town of 400 houses, lying in the south-west corner of the Isferayeen plain. To the north are ridges of the main range, to the west, two miles distant, a rugged offshoot of that range known as the Kohbaba. The site being suggested as possibly that of Hecatompylos, the Parthian capital, I took some trouble to ascertain the existence of any ruins or antiquities. In the centre of the town is one of the high circular mounds, so frequently met with in northern Khorassan, surmounted by the ruins of a mud fort of no very ancient date. It bears the name of Ali Verdi Khan, the first chief of the Geraili Toorks settled in the country. A small Imamzada lying a mile to the south-east of the walls, contains a tomb covered with large blue tiles, on which are verses from the Koran; near it are the ruins of a small stone building apparently of quite recent date, but said by the people to be older than the town. For some miles to the south the ground is covered with fragments of small red brick and blue glazed tiles, indicating the site of one of the towns founded after the Arab occupation, to which also the peculiar form of the modern name also points. Further to the east are the ruins of two mud forts raised on mounds similar to that within the town, having nothing to mark their age or origin; three miles to the north-west is a stone fort crowning a low isolated limestone rock, in good preservation, and apparently of modern construction. The rock within the walls is pierced by a shaft to a depth of about 100 feet, from which, it is said, a communication exists with the village of Garma, half a mile to the west. That the excavation was never of use as a well was evident from the remains of a number of large earthen vessels built into the foot of the outer wall which could only have been provided as receptacles for storing water. The only coins known to have been

Jah Jerm Town.

Antiquities.

found are some silver pieces stamped (it is said) on one side with the usual inscription of the "Khalifat," on the other, with the name of the city of Jah Jarm. There are no visible traces of remains other than those of a small town of the period of Arab occupation, the dispersion of fragments of masonry to so great a distance being accounted for by the fact that the plain is liable to sudden inundation from the mountains to the north. That the present population of Jah Jarm, 400 families, is only a remnant, is clear from the great extent of the old walls; in the time of Nadir Shah there were some 5,000 families, and as late as the reign of Fath Ali Shah, the town furnished 200 men to the regiment known as the Lashkar-i-Arab-o-Ajam. Its decline is attributed entirely to the Turkomans, who after the death of Nadir devastated the country, destroying the irrigation works, by which only so large a population could have been maintained. The mounds of numerous kanats, now dry, surround the cultivated area. With the water supply at the present time available, the crops raised are insufficient for the inhabitants, who import largely from Shahrood and the Gurgan plain, supplying in exchange salt obtained from the water of the Kal Shor, a briny stream flowing through the plain to the south. The scanty revenue of the "Belook" of four villages—Jah Jarm, Gurma, Iver and Durra, of in all 700 families—is entirely devoted to the maintenance of 100 horsemen for border defence. These are, to a great extent, mounted by the Elkhani of Bujnoord, who relies on them to hold the passes north of the town. Their number is, however, wholly insufficient, and they are at times compelled to witness helplessly the passage and return of bands of raiders laden with booty and prisoners.

Decrease of population.

Causes.

21*st November.* *Iver*, 7 *miles.*—From Jah Jarm to Shahrood there are two routes; that usually taken by caravans skirts the south of Kohbaba and crosses a barren waterless plain, passing within a few miles of Mayomay on the main road and through Bostam, this is the longer but the safest route. The alternative route lies to the north of Kohbaba crossing the lower spurs of the main range. It has never, so far as is known, been travelled by any European. Leaving Jah Jarm with a sufficient escort, I marched to Iver, distant seven miles, thence to Nardin, said to be 32 miles; the country is uninhabited and constantly traversed by "Allamans." At present the road is comparatively safe, the Yamoots having their attention fully engaged by the Russians and the Persian Governor of Asterabad, who is bidding for their favour. Iver is a small village of 70 or 80 houses, lying in broken ground on the skirts of the main range.

Routes to Shahrood Bostam.

22*nd November.* *Nardin*, 26 *miles.*—Marched to Nardin, 26 miles, through barren waterless valleys dividing the spurs of the main range from those of the Kohbaba. The summits of the low hills on either side are formed of a highly crystalline white limestone, the lower slopes of mottled marls and clay; vegetation is almost entirely wanting. The surface of the valleys has a thin covering of varieties of salsola and thorny herbs, and the single spring of water is of a briny saltness.

Nardin.

Nardin, the chief village of the "Belook" or chiefship, lies in a small plain surrounded by high mountains to the north rising to a considerable elevation, and clothed with dense forest. To the north-east there is a depression leading to the fertile plateaux of Kalposh, Dasht, and Paighambar Daniel, and thence to the banks of the Gurgan above the gorge through which it enters the plain. South-east there is a similar depression, through which pass roads to Magas and Gilan on the skirt of the Bostam plain, and thence to Asterabad and Bostam.

The basin contains one single village, and that a mere mud fort with a few gardens. The soil is fertile enough, but the supply of water is limited to two scanty springs.

No. doubt with a sufficient outlay on karez the whole basin might be brought under cultivation. The Khan of Nardin, Afrasiab Khan, received me with the usual hospitality, and came out of the fort some distance on foot. I shortly learned that he was in trouble with the authorities at Teheran. In his capacity of "warden of the marches" he receives 700 tomans per mensem and a village rent free, also a sum of 20 tomans per annum assigned on the villages under his charge for each man of 200 horsemen maintained for border defence. News having reached the officials at Teheran that the chief was short of the proper quota of men and horses, an inspection in truly Persian fashion was ordered. The whole body of two hundred men were summoned to appear at Teheran with the chief's son before the officers charged with the inspection. They had left two days before my arrival, and with them all the Khan's own horses to make up the tale. The shame of receiving a guest and a foreigner on foot, and in a half empty fort, was very clearly depicted on my host's countenance. His look was that of a thoroughly disgraced man, and we had not been alone for two minutes before he burst out into violent abuse of the whole Government, only excepting the Shah, who escaped with a side blow at his weakness in allowing the whole power to slip away into the hands of corrupt Wazirs. It is seldom that a Persian attributes the misgovernment of his country to his sovereign, the whole burden is thrown on the Ministers and the Governors appointed by them. The Khan admitted that he had been short of the proper number of horses, for he had found it impossible to purchase from the Goklan and Yamoots, from whom alone they could be obtained. It is probable that the increased security of the border and immunity from the constant raids of former times had given him an opening to reduce his guards, without fear of detection and with profit to himself. His line of posts extend from Nardin, which covers the villages in the plain up to the boundary of Asterabad to the Gurgan and the posts of the Shahdilloo Koords. The horsemen are stationed in small parties of two and three on heights commanding the principal passes, the presence of a raiding party being telegraphed by fires or gunshots. If too large to be met and driven back, it is allowed to pass unmolested, information being sent to Shahrood and the districts in rear, and the passes closed by strong posts of footmen

Persian inspection.

Nardin border.

from the neighbouring villages. This compels the raiders to seek a passage on their return more to the east, where they should be met by the Koord border guards. Usually they are able to slip through an unguarded pass at night, and gain the broken country between the Gurgan and Attrek, where they are safe from pursuit.

History. After the death of Nadir, Nardin was completely destroyed by the Turkomans, and was not again occupied till the latter end of the reign of Fath Ali Shah, when the Khan's grandfather obtained a grant of the lands, and collecting 200 or 300 families from all parts of Khorassan formed settlements at two or three points of the border. Being found useful in guarding a very open part of the border, Mahomed Shah made the Khan a present of two guns and assigned the whole of the revenue of the villages for the maintenance of a small force.

Reliable information regarding Lamakyn's column on the Attrek. With the movements of the Russians on the Attrek the Khan seemed well acquainted; they had lately moved out from Chekishlar to a point three marches up the Attrek, where they were encamped, and were occupied in surveying for a new fort. They had satisfied the Yamoots with presents, hiring their camels at very high rates. On the Persian side the Yamoots were nominally tributary, but the cash tribute was accepted in kind at their own valuation of the goods and their depredations in the Persian border villages were passed over in silence, the Governor being afraid of driving them away by any attempt to punish them or obtain satisfaction. Within the actual border the country was safer than it had been for some time, and except about the Gurgan, where there were usually parties lurking, there was not any necessity for guards. The Yamoots, the Khan assured me, would be delighted to see me if I went amongst them, especially if I had any message for them from the British Government, for which they had a traditional respect and liking. I said that I had no wish to visit the Yemoots, or to go out of my way, my business being at Asterabad. The feeling of the Yamoots referred to is mentioned by Vambery, and must, I think, be traced as far back as the visit of Mr. Thomson to them. Some assurances must then have been given or expectations raised, the remembrance of which still lingers.

Feelings of Yamoots towards England.

1843.

25th November. Kanchi, 16 *miles*.—Marched from Toolbin down the valley of Nowdeh to Kanchi, one of four hamlets known collectively as Pursian. The village lies in a glen down which flows a sub-tributary stream. It has 150 houses and a good stretch of rice land up and down the valley. The revenue is paid to the Government of Asterabad through Mirza Allah Yar Khan Sirtip, of the Asterabad Regiment, Governor of the Belook. The people, though living in a narrow pent up valley abundantly watered, and growing little but rice, are tall, robust, and healthy looking in every respect, a finer looking race than the inhabitants of the dry highland glens about Nardin. They are of Toork origin, and speak that language among themselves, though all know Persian. Their fixed revenue is only 25 khar-

People.

Revenue.

wars = 218 maunds Indian, and valued in cash at 10 to 15 tomans, less than one-tenth of the gross produce. They, however, com-
Security. plained much of illegal exactions. Their position secures their immunity from Turkoman raids, and they know them only by friendly intercourse. From Toolbin the valley falls very rapidly, the mountain slopes on either hand ending abruptly in rugged precipices. The glens and ravines seaming the hill sides are clothed with juniper to a height of 2,000 to 3,000 feet, above which is a dense forest of scrub, elm, oak, and maple. The valley is for the most part closely and carefully cultivated, the fields being carefully terraced for irrigation, and fenced with quick-set hedges of thorn and bramble, or with good walls and banks. Every untilled spot is covered with a free growth of bramble and scrub, an indication of the proximity of the Caspian and its moisture laden atmosphere. The rich colours of the hill sides adds much to the attraction of the fine scenery of the valley. Long slopes of brilliant red clay alternate with darker limestones and sandstones, and trap rocks of fantastic forms and varied
Chinashk. colours jut out from every spur. Four miles from Toolbin lies the large village of Chinashk high up on the left of the valley. The main road to Bostam lies through the valley, and beyond through the village of Tillaver, and over a high pass is the plain of Khusheyeilak mountains. The Sipah Salar's 30 guns were dragged over this, and later a battery of the Shah's escort. It can, however, have been no easy task, and could hardly be attempted in the face of an active enemy. The Kelantar or headman of Chinashk, accompanied by four fine boys, his sons, rode with me down the valley. He is one of the few contented men I have met in Persia, but nevertheless, he said, it would not be a bad day for the country when the Russians took it. It was evidently to him only a matter of time. The cession of the Attrek frontier and the Russian settlements at Gomashtuppa and Chekishlar appear to have produced a firm impression that their further advance, if not imminent, cannot be long delayed. The idea that the Persian Government can ever effectively possess itself of its share of the Attrek lands is scouted.

26th November. To Nowdeh, 19 miles.—From Kanchi a good path winds through the valley to Nowdeh. The defile is open for 10 or 11 miles, and cultivated wherever the windings of the stream leave a level space. A few miles above Nowdeh the hills close in, the banks of the stream rise, and a heavy forest fills the defile, extending up to the crests of the hills and down to the
Forest. clearings of Nowdeh. The trees are chiefly alder, oak, sycamore, and elm. At Nowdeh the valley expands, and opens into the Gurgan plain. A low ridge surmounted by a tomb lies at the mouth of the valley, and forms a most invaluable watch-tower for the villagers. The plain beyond for many miles is covered with scattered patches of forest and dense cane-brakes, through which lead narrow paths to the edge of the open prairie, on which
Nowdeh. lie the Turkoman "obahs." Nowdeh is a large village formed of three detached hamlets, in all 200 houses. The level ground in

the valley is cleared and closely cultivated, but dense forest encircles the clearing, meeting above and below it, and forming a most effectual barrier, behind which the villagers rest secure from any attack by their neighbours in the plain. They are fine active men, well armed, and good foresters, and more than a match on their own ground for any number of Turkomans. Their houses are built of cane plaited into a timber frame, open in front, and without fire-place. The open front is closed at night by a curtain of split cane work. No better shelter is, they say, necessary, for the winter is short and mild. Snow falls, but lies for at most 24 hours. The summer is hot and unhealthy, malarious fever being very prevalent. The village is one of 63 villages of the Kohsar Finderisk Belook, all lying on the flank of the Yamoot Turkoman country, but still more free from ravage than the distant villages on the south side of the main range. The forest is of course the main source of their safety, but they have also a good organization for defence. There are 15 villages in the valley, all near enough to support each other, and communicate either by gun-shot or signal fires. They can collect in from three to four hours 1,000 men, all armed with serviceable guns, and to a certain extent organized, for they are paid a sum sufficient to enable them to keep up their equipment and supply of ammunition, and are accustomed to work together in parties of 30 to 40 as guards, escorts, &c.; knowing every path in the forest, and having great confidence in their own power to meet any enemy on their own ground, they would be formidable even to a disciplined force. Nowdeh grows rice and wheat and a little cotton; of the first, large quantities are exported to Khorassan. The people have a tradition that at some remote period the Caspian covered the plain, running into the valley and forming a small bay, along the shores of which was a forest of date palms; the villages on either side of the bay used to communicate by boats, and had an extensive trade across the sea. In those times they paid a revenue of 12,000 tomans, the produce of the sale of dates. The mountains were bare of forest, the present dense growth of deciduous trees having spread gradually from the west.* The tradition is very curious, and coupled with the actual presence of the date palm at Sari cannot be easily rejected. The mouth of the Nowdeh glen is still called the Dihana-i-Khurmaloo (khurma being Persian for a date tree), a fact in itself suggestive, though to be accounted for, as it may have its origin in the chance presence of a single specimen. The village pays now a revenue of 200 kharwars of rice, the produce being in favourable years six to eight times that amount. Wheat is more cultivated than formerly, and want of good roads and security alone prevents the increase of the production of cotton.

Irregulars.

Date groves of former days.

In the whole range of the Alburz, from Teheran to the Herat river, there is no point at which the chain could be so readily crossed by either road or railroad as on the line of the Nowdeh

Most practicable pass east of Teheran.

* My informant also asserted that the Nowdeh stream had in those days a much larger volume, and had been dried up by the growth of the forest on the mountains.

valley. Up to the village of Toolbin the valley is open enough and the gradients easy, thence a low easy pass leads to the Nardin plateau, from whence either Jah Jerm or Mayomay might be reached without crossing any difficult country. There is no other line offering anything like similar facilities. Coal of good quality has already been found in the mountains to the west.

27th November. To Ramàyan, 12 miles.—Marched to Ramayan, a large village of 400 houses, 12 miles west from Nowdeh, lying in a glen enclosed by two forest covered spurs of the Khushyeilak Mountain. The road lies for a mile or two through old clearings, overgrown with cane-brakes and dense thickets of bramble matted with wild vine and wild hop, beyond and around the clearings is a heavy forest of oak, elm, and beech. The village is a large one, and can turn out from 700 to 800 armed men, including those of the outlying hamlets. As at Nowdeh, the villagers have little to fear from the Turkomans, for a belt of four or five miles of forest and cane-brake effectually protects them; a few head of cattle are at times driven off and the herdsmen captured, but this is not of frequent occurrence, and there is a good deal of friendly intercourse, buying and selling of horses, and exchange of manufactures. I was assured by the Nayeb, or Governor of the Belook, that the Yamoots, the "Choomoors," or cultivators, were quite inclined to become peaceable subjects of the Shah, and that the few robberies that occurred were chargeable to a few bad characters who were well known. As to their removing to the Russian side of the Attrek, he considered it utterly impossible; they were as much tied to the soil as the Persians themselves. Some respectable men of the neighbouring "obahs" were with the Khan, and confirmed what he had said. They subsequently offered to take me to their settlement and forward me on to the "Charwars" or nomads on the Attrek, who would be delighted to see an English officer, for they had always looked upon them as their protectors. I replied that I was merely travelling to Asterabad, and had no business among the Yamoots on the Attrek. At the same time I learnt the truth of a rumour I had heard at Nardin that a force of 300 or 400 Russians had marched out on the Attrek and were encamped near a "dam," about which there was a dispute between the Jaffir Bai and Atta Bai tribes. The Yamoots had offered no opposition, but the Turkomans believed that the force was likely to go up as far as Kyzil Arvat and Karakilla to punish the Tekkah. The carriage of the force was all hired from the Jaffir Bai, a portion of whom were subjects of Russia.

Yamoot Choomoors.

Lamakyn's force.

28th November. To Katool, 22 miles.—Marched shortly after daybreak with a strong guard for Finderisk and Katool. Clearing the glen of Ramyan the road lay for some miles through wide clearings opening on to the plain, on which a couple of miles distant, but hidden by tall cane-brakes, were the "obahs" of the Yamoot "Choomoors." At Finderisk the guard was changed, and a halt of a couple of hours enabled me to see something of the picturesque village, which at a distance looks like a rambling

Forest village of Mazanderan.

collection of old barns overgrown with rank tropical vegetation. A closer inspection, however, showed that there was much order and regularity in the disposition of the farms, and an almost Chinese regularity and neatness in ordering the precincts of each little homestead. The centre building is usually of two stories, the whole, to the top of the tiled or more commonly thatched roof, not more than 15 to 18 feet. The walls framed with timber are formed of neatly woven cane work plastered inside with mud. A wide eave or verandah runs round the four sides, forming a covered and well protected balcony for winter or wet weather use. A thatch-roofed room, raised 25 to 30 feet from the ground on posts, is used in summer as a sleeping place by the family. The advantage of sleeping well above the ground in the fever season is fully recognized, and the people even, when working or hunting at a distance from the village, always select some convenient tree or make a nest raised on poles some distance above the ground; these were visible in all the forest clearings, often like huge birds' nests. In winter the loft or platform is used as a receptacle for cotton, silk, &c. Flanking the farm house are usually two or three long barns with timber posts and walls of the kind vulgarly known as "wattle and daub." Each of these has a paddock with a neat fence of split cane, the straw ricks are well raised from the ground on cross beams, and in a corner of the enclosure stand three or four gigantic barrel-shaped baskets, plastered inside with mud, in which wheat and rice are stored. Each enclosure has its group of orange trees, also railed in, and a few vines. Leaving Ramyan, a ride of 11 miles through mist and heavy rains brought us to Katool. One of my guard from Finderisk was, I find, a Yamoot Charwar (nomad) now settled down in the service of the Khan, and employed by him in his negotiations with his neighbours. From him I learnt that the Russian force on the Attrek are preparing to build a fort. They have timber ready cut brought over from Baku, which they propose towing up the Attrek. The Yemoots, he said, would not oppose the building, but the Russians might expect trouble from the Tekkah Turkomans.

Fort on the Attrek.

29*th November*. *Asterabad*, 25 *miles*.—Marched from Katool to Asterabad. The road, lying for the most part through an open plain within sight of the Yamoot "obahs," is considered very dangerous, notwithstanding that the Yamoots are subject and living and cultivating within reach of the capital of the province. That the country was really insecure was evident, for the villagers moved about in large parties, well armed, and the ploughmen were at work with their rifles on their backs. The Yamoots are in fact masters of the country; their nominal allegiance is gained at the cost of the unfortunate peasantry. Any attempt to coerce them, if made in sufficient force, would be answered by their retirement beyond the Attrek into Russian territory, a course to which the Persian authorities are very loth to drive them. A guard of fifty men fairly mounted and armed escorted me to Nowdeh, whence a fresh guard took me to Asterabad. The road lay for the most part through a magnificent park-like plain extending from

Yamoot relations with Persia.

the foot of the hills to the Gurgan river, distant 8 to 10 miles. The villages, few and far between, are surrounded by a good stretch of rice and wheat cultivation, and in place of the mud wall of Khorassan, are defended by wet ditches backed by tall hedges of thorn and brier, the clusters of thatched cane huts buried in a luxuriant vegetation give them a tropical aspect, and there is little save the fine men and the fine cattle in the farm-yards to distinguish many of them from the forest hamlets of Bengal or the Deccan. After seven or eight successive crops with a yield of from 50 to 70 fold, a single season's fallow is allowed, and nothing is ever returned to the land in the shape of manure. A good deal of cotton of a very fine quality is raised for the Russian market.

Cotton.

On approaching the town I was received by a party sent by the Governor to meet me, and conducted to one of the best houses in the town, secured for me by the British agent. A telegram from the Minister for Foreign Affairs had procured for me a better reception than I had had any reason to expect, the whole country being notoriously in the opposite interest, a circumstance militating against a very cordial reception of a foreigner, and more especially of an Englishman.

Kazee Syud Ahmad at Asterabad.

Kazee Syud Ahmad, whom I had sent to wait for me, has rejoined me; having improved most zealously the opportunities of gaining information of interest as to the state of the country and people that his stay in the town had given him. Having been taken no notice of by the authorities on his arrival, he was able to communicate more freely with the people than would otherwise have been possible. His knowledge of both European and Native mode of treatment of the ordinary ailments of the country also opened many doors to him.

30*th November.* *Asterabad.*—Received a visit from the agent of the Persian Foreign Office, an official whose ostensible business is to give notice of the arrival, and entertain or watch foreign visitors of all kinds, in fact he is a delegate of the Foreign Office, keeping an eye on the relations of the local Government with its neighbours. Here, at Asterabad, if anywhere, the post is an important and necessary one. I gathered that the Russians have complete and avowed possession of the Attrek border, but have not yet taken any very important step towards an armed occupation and the subjugation of the Yamoot tribes. Their policy appears to be as usual to advance cautiously and to win over the tribes who might by a more actively offensive policy be forced into a determined opposition, or be driven across the Attrek into Persian territory. Though now for the most part nomads and plunderers, they clearly have the makings of very valuable subjects or allies, either in peace or war. They are far more industrious as tillers of the soil than is supposed, and their value as auxiliaries has been demonstrated by the services rendered to the Russians by the clans of the Jaffir Bai tribe of Yamoots attached to the Russian cause. The lands across the Attrek do not appear capable of supporting any very large population as at present tilled. The construction of irrigation works would pre-

Russian position.

sumably render the whole plain as far as the slopes of the Kuren Dagh and Balkhan culturable.

The Sahib-i-Ikhtiar, Governor of Asterabad, Suleyman Khan Afshar, visited me in the afternoon. He is an elderly man, and has served the Government in different capacities for many years, and stands in high favour with the Shah. He previously held the government of Kermanshah. Asterabad is considered a most difficult and responsible post: on one side are the turbulent and plundering Turkomans, on the other the Russians, with whom Persian relations are always delicate. The Sahib-i-Ikhtiar is given the credit of having resisted, as much as possible, the recent encroachment of the Russians on the Attrek, and their assumption of authority over the Turkoman tribes living on the borders of the two territories. At present the matter is in abeyance, the Yamoots paying tribute to neither party, but it will certainly be decided as the superior power may desire. The Jaffir Bai section of the Yamoots appear to have finally thrown in their lot with the masters of the Caspian. Governor of Asterabad.

1*st December*. *Asterabad.*—Visited the Russian Consul and the Governor. The former has a good house with a very fine garden, the property of a Persian, but tenanted for a long time by the Russian Consulate, and altered and improved to suit their taste. A small guard of Cossacks is attached to the Consulate, and an establishment of Persian servants and gholams, &c. When first located in Asterabad, a good deal of money was spent in entertainments, presents, &c., but the expenses have lately been curtailed, and the business of extending Russian influence by the arts of peace has reverted to those empowered to use the still more persuasive arguments of war. All the money formerly cast on the waters of Asterabad has returned in the form of a widespread and deeply-rooted influence which must be of incalculable value at a time when both powers are bidding for the allegiance of the truculent but wealthy and powerful tribes of the deserts. Consul. Expenditure and sphere of action curtailed.

The Governor's residence or palace consists of low buildings, with red tiled roofs and long projecting eaves, giving a pagodah-like appearance, surrounding three or four large courts. At the gate of the outer court were displayed the artillery of the province, seven light brass field guns. The inner court is planted with fine orange trees, and watered by a small stream fed by a couple of very feeble fountains from which flowed muddy streamlets. The Dewankhana and other apartments on one side of the court are large and lofty, and well furnished. The Governor and his son, the Deputy Governor, received me with much courtesy. The conversation, after discussing the latest European news, turned on the state of the province. The Governor said, I believe with truth, that during his five years' tenure there had been a marked improvement in the security of the roads and of the villages on the border, and also an increase of trade and population. I should be inclined, however, to attribute the first to the external pressure on the plundering tribes, and the second to the immigration from the famine-stricken districts during the famine. He referred very Palace.

Opinions on settlement of the Attrek tract.

cautiously to the proceedings of his neighbours on the Caspian, but affirmed that the tract they had occupied or commenced to occupy on the Caspian was utterly worthless to them, being incapable of supporting any large population, the tribes across the Attrek being dependent on those on the Persian side for their grain supplies, save in years of very exceptional rainfall. Canals might do a great deal, but the country rises rapidly a short distance from the river, and would not easily be watered by canals. The mass of the Yamoots, he considered, would become peaceable subjects of Persia, and were already giving up their roving habits. For two years they had not visited in such large numbers as usual their summer quarters on the Balkhan, and were turning their attention to the Kara Balkhan, or lower ranges between the Attrek and Gurgan, where there was ample pasture. Fear of the Tekkahs alone prevented their resorting freely to that tract. This would certainly be a happy solution for Persia of the main difficulty in the joint occupation of the Attrek tract; but it is one that will scarcely satisfy the Russian Governor of the Trans-Caspian settlements, who is said to be scattering gold among the tribes to win them over to the Russian side. The Turkomans themselves, the Governor said, had a dread of being turned into Cossacks, but money is a powerful agent with them, and one tribe has already fallen into the net. The magnetic attraction of an enormous body backed by the prestige of a sovereign wielding a mysterious and irresistible authority must act sooner or later on the scattered atoms lying without and yet so close to its influence.

2nd December. Asterabad.—Heavy and continuous rain prevented my receiving some promised visits save one from the Russian Consul. Whether from a want of sympathy or from a change of policy consequent on the improvement of the Russian position in the province, the Consul appears to have little friendly intercourse with natives of any class. He lives almost entirely within the enclosure of the Consulate

3rd December. Asterabad.—Visited the agent of the Persian Foreign Office known as the Balyoos Khan, a very pleasant and intelligent old man, but in the last stage of debility from constant attacks of malarious fever. He sighed for a return to the air of his native Irak, but said that his Government was a hard taskmaster, and his numerous applications were left unattended to. Judging from the agent's rank and state, he must be very much more than a mere receiver of foreign guests, and has probably some voice in the direction of the relations of the local Government with the Russian authorities. He expressed, I think sincerely, a great wish to see their connection with the English Government renewed on a better footing, such a connection being, as he said, the only hope for Persia.

4th December. Asterabad.—Received through Agha Mahomed Ismail, merchant of Asterabad, who has extensive dealings with Khiva, the following information regarding the state of that country. My informant's knowledge was superficial and deficient in detail, but is still worth recording. The whole of the State of

Khiva appears to have been actually annexed to the Russian Empire, the Khan governing as a Russian servant, and neither as a feudatory nor a tributary. All the chief towns are garrisoned by Russian troops; extensive fortifications are being constructed on the Aral, a stage or 10 fursakhs from the town of Khiva. The Khan maintains no troops of his own, being entirely dependent for protection on the Imperial troops. He has a fixed allowance for his personal expenses, and simply collects the revenue for the State. The people being extremely bigoted Sunnis do not willingly submit to their foreign rulers, and may be regarded as decidedly hostile. A caravanserai in the town is set apart for the Russian merchants, who resort there in large numbers. The Yamoots of the Khan's territory, *i.e.*, those living within reach of Russian garrisons, are quiet. The tribes on the skirts of the oasis still plunder on the roads, retreating into the desert when pursued. Caravans trade regularly with Khiva, exporting from Asterabad European goods chiefly brought from Constantinople, but in part from Yezd. At first sight it appears improbable that English goods carried from Shikarpoor could sell profitably at Khiva, but there can be no doubt of the fact. A fine calico with Manchester brand is dyed at Yezd for women's veils ("burka"), and exported to all parts of Turkistan. No heavy import duties appear as yet to have been put upon English manufactures.

This I have since heard contradicted. The Khan holds as tributary all the lands on the south bank of the Amou. The Russian troops are also all north of the river. (Sd.) G.C.N.

English goods in Khiva.

In conversation with the Governor I learnt that General Lamakyn had lately visited the Attrek and summoned the Yamoots from the Persian side. Presents of guns, cash, &c., had been promised to the Aksakals, and the intention was to invite them to settle in Russian territory. The Aksakals had applied to the Governor for instructions, and had been advised not to attend the summons, being threatened with an attack in case they should decide to do so. The result was that the General returned with his presents to Kyzilsoo. There is probably some truth in the story, and it serves to throw light on the relations of both powers with the tribes, but it is highly improbable that the Yamoots were deterred by any threats on the part of the Persians, for they have no force fit to cope with them, and the Eelkhani of Bujnoord, who might give them trouble, is said to be on his way to Teheran. In his absence nothing could be done.

Failure of Lamakyn's summons to the Yemoots.

Seeing nothing to be gained by further delay in this portion of the border, I have determined to march to-morrow for Teheran. It would be perfectly practicable with a little negotiation to visit the Yamoots on both sides of the Attrek, and an English officer would certainly be well received by them, but a near approach makes the objections to such a proceeding very apparent. It would serve both to expedite the measures of the officials on the Caspian border and to stimulate the work of absorption, and at the same time would raise undue expectations and probably bring trouble on the tribes concerned. No clearer insight into the political condition of the border could be, I believe, gained by actual intercourse with the tribes, though there is of course much of interest in their actual condition that must necessarily escape

Objections to visiting the Yamoots.

observation from a distance, and much of interest regarding the topography of the country that might be learnt.

5th December. Koord Mohalla, 16 *miles.*—Marched to Koord Mohalla, a large village of 50 to 60 houses in the Belook of Anazan. The village is the largest in this part of the province; it covers a very great extent of ground, each family having its separate homesteads with barns and paddocks neatly fenced. After entering the village 35 minutes passed in winding through deep narrow lanes, passing stackyards, orchards and farms to the house provided for my party in its centre. The villagers are a haggard, ill-looking, fever-stricken set, contrasting most unfavorably with the fine looking population of the forest villages further east. The cause of this difference is to be found, probably, in difference of position, the western side of the province being more completely shut in between the mountains and the sea, and having probably a heavier rainfall. A short distance from the city the road strikes the old highway of Shah Abbas, and continues along it or more frequently through the fields skirting it, as far as Koord Mohalla, which lies half mile to the right and four or five miles from the seashore. The road or causeway was apparently laid down with great care or labour, being paved throughout with large pebbles from the numerous mountain streams traversing the forest covered plain and drained by deep ditches fenced with a good hedge of white thorn and wild pomegranate, which is equally thorny and impenetrable; but it was not sufficiently raised, and gaps for cross drainage were neglected. This, with the inevitable Persian indifference to repair, has rendered it what it is at the present day, a monument to the wisdom of a single sovereign, and a reproach to the neglect and apathy of a long line of successors. The country offers no serious obstacles to the maintenance of a good road, for the cross drainage streams flow in well defined deep beds, and the forest and undergrowth have not at all the uncontrollable luxuriance of the tropics. Though not kept clear by traffic, the original clearing is still open. With the material for fascines so close at hand, a small yearly outlay would make a good passable track. A few miles from Asterabad is the picturesque roadside Imamzadah of Roshanabad; Koord Mohalla has a small port known as Mulla Killa, two miles distant at the north of the Karasoo stream. The villagers have no boats, save small dug-outs, but the port is frequented by the Turkomans, who bring cargoes of salt and naphtha from Chalakan for the Asterabad market.

6th December. Hasht Tikka, miles.—A dense malarious vapour shrouded the scattered homesteads and forest, hiding from view both sea and mountains till midday, when it rose in white clouds under the sun's rays and, caught by a slight northerly breeze, was wafted away inland, and finally vanished, leaving a line of blue haze still clinging to the forest clad slopes at the base of the range. The direct road to Nowkanda and Ashraf lies nearly due west along the old road, for the most part through forest or deserted clearings. Traffic follows narrow tracks on the side of the road

as far as Nowkanda, where a detour is made to avoid a marshy tract to the right as far as the village of Gez, whence a path winding through thickets of bramble and thorn, swampy rice fields, and deep miry forest land, leads to the large villages of Hasht Tikka, and Gullogah. Gez is an ordinary forest village of 300 to 400 houses, one of the principal in the Anazan Belook; it owes its notoriety solely to its port, the Bundar-i-Gez, 3½ miles distant, with which it has however little connection, there being direct routes to Asterabad and Mazanderan. I was met near Gez by Rahim Khan of Nowkanda, son of Hamza Khan, Sir A. Burnes' host. Rahim Khan is a young active looking man. He has charge of the whole Anazan Belook, which divides Asterabad from Mazanderan and stretches from the Hazar Jareeb Belook beyond the first range to the sea. There are many large villages, Nowkanda 500 houses, Gez 300, Sewan 300, Hasht Tikka 200, but they are completely buried in forest, in which the cultivated clearings have made little impression. The coast of Anazan and a portion of the east border were till recently exposed to the attacks of the neighbouring Jafir Bai tribe of Turkomans. A force of horse and foot is maintained for the defence of the villages under the orders of the Khan. From Gez to the port and village of Kinara a narrow track winds through forest clearing for a couple of miles, and thence across a belt of marshy ground covered with a thick jungle of cane and wild pomegranate, and intersected by numerous fresh water creeks with deep treacherous bottoms, intervening between the forest and the sand-banks on the shore. Kinara is a miserable looking village of 100 to 150 cabins—built of waste wood, remnants, of old native boats, and the sides of packing cases and thatched with rushes—standing in a double line along the beach 30 to 40 yards from the water's edge. A ruinous looking jetty runs out about 100 yards into the shallow water enabling native boats drawing two or three feet of water to discharge their cargoes. Russian barks trading to Baku and Astrakhan and other ports on the Caspian lie off about a mile, and the larger Turkoman boats, the "kasaboi," usually send their cargoes either to the jetty or direct to the beach in "naos," or small, narrow, canoe-shaped "dug-outs." The Russian Vice-Consul, a Nestorian of the Caspian provinces, several Russian Armenian merchants, and a Persian official in charge of the customs and the port live in the village. About 10 miles north-east of the port is the island of Ashurada, on which are the barracks of the Russian garrison of detachments of two regiments of infantry, and the residence of the Commodore of the East Caspian squadron, and other officials. Three or four small vessels-of-war and a few steam-launches are stationed in the bay to watch the Turkomans and collect the duty levied on their boats. These trade only between their own ports and the village ports of the Asterabad, and Mazanderan coasts and the island of Chalaken, whence they bring cargoes of naphtha and salt. Every boat is bound to show the Russians a pass. This rule is rigorously enforced, and has put an entire stop to the piratical incursions of the Turkomans, from which the coast had so long suffered.

Gez.

The Chief of Anazan.

Bunder-i-Gez and Kinara.

Ashurada.

From Gez there is a path along the beach westward, but it can only be followed with an experienced guide, for the numerous creeks and backwaters abound in quicksands, and the fords are few and unmarked. The path to Nowkanda, Gullogah, and Ashraf lies across a marshy plain covered with dense beds of reeds and cane and immense tangled masses of bramble. The few clearings are cultivated with rice, and remain more or less under water the whole year. Three or four miles west from Gez a high green rampart of earth runs from the base of the mountains through the forest and over the marshy plain to the shore. It is said to have been raised by Hamza Sultan, an ancestor of the present Khan of Anazan, as a defence against an attack of the Lurs, 250 years ago. The Lurs were defeated with a loss of 20,000 men, and finally driven out of Mazanderan. So stands the tradition, but the Lurs came from the west, and the rampart was obviously made for defence against an enemy coming from the east for the ditch is to the east, and the banquette or path under the crest of the bank to the west. The Turkomans are more likely therefore to have been the invaders, but why tradition should confound them with the Lurs is a riddle. A rampart so formed with natural slopes and a broad crest is indestructible, it is possible therefore that it is as old as, and had some connection with, Alexander's wall on the opposite shore of the bay. If of no other interest the rampart gives a very satisfactory proof of the alleged recession of the Caspian. The sea flank is now at some distance, not less than 300 or 400 yards from the water's edge. Swamps and cane-brake rendered it unapproachable, but of the fact there was no doubt. The slope of the shore is very gentle, reeds growing out above the water at 100 yards distance. From Gez to Hasht Tikka, the last village in Asterabad, is a distance of about six miles, equal to double the distance on fair ground, for the ride with a few short stoppages occupied nearly three hours.

Rampart of Hamza Sultan.

Proof of recession of Caspian.

7th December. Ashraf, 16 *miles.*—From Hasht Tikka the road runs west, following the Shah Abbas road and crossing a small stream which divides the two provinces, passes for a couple of miles through the scattered farms, gardens, and orchards of Gullogah. The people could not give a satisfactory reason for their building over so large an extent of ground in a country in which every yard of land has to be reclaimed from a tenacious and ineradicable forest growth, but it is obviously a precaution against fire. The houses are of cane and light woodwork, and are usually surrounded with ricks of hay and straw. The village is a large one, and is said to have a population of 4,000 to 5,000 souls, which is quite possible, for it covers not less than two to three square miles. Beyond it is the high road enclosed by a double hedge and in better order, passes through a fine, open, well cultivated country, marshy towards the shore, but firm and dry for several miles from the hill slopes. The distance from the shore to the cultivated margin (some distance up the hill slopes) is at this point about eight miles. Forest, except in patches, entirely disappears; the fields are clear, and well fenced and drained, and

the villages are more numerous, and have usually a few substantial houses with neat red-tiled roofs. The crest of a spur overhanging the road at a point where it touches the hill-skirt six or seven miles from Ashraf commands a fine view of the cultivated plain of Ashraf and the forest of Anazan. To the west far distant the Demavend range forms a white wall on the horizon, towards the base of which stretches a grand expanse of rich cultivated land and green meadows with wide straggling hedgerows, clusters of thatched-roofed villages, and patches of forest and woodland. To the south the sea was hidden under a bank of mist. North the wooded spurs of Alburz fall away in easy undulations to the plain. These lower spurs are little encumbered with the dense forest of the upper ranges. They might at no great cost be cleared, and should with their rich soil, warm sun, and ample rainfall supply Persia with all the most valuable products of the subtropical regions of Asia. Tea, coffee, and chinchona would no doubt thrive well, and where the vine grows wild in such luxuriance, vineyards could scarcely fail in yield and quality of grapes to rival those of Europe.

Approaching Ashraf the road and the aspect of the country again improve. The fields are fenced, and have strong wooden gates and stiles. The ground is kept clean and ploughed deep, two pairs of very fine oxen working in relays, the plough also is heavier than that used in other parts. Wheat is grown as frequently as rice, and the cotton was unusually fine, growing to five and six feet with heavy pods.

8th December. Town of Ashraf. — Halt at Ashraf. The town is now in a far better state than when visited by Fraser and Burnes. It contains from 1,200 to 1,400 families and 40 to 50 shops. Three or four of the leading merchants have transactions with Constantinople and Astrakhan, exporting cotton, sugar, European goods, cutlery, hardware; importing chiefly iron, iron vessels, crockery, tea-urns, &c. Their port is Meshed-i-Ser, distant 19 fursakhs; the road passing through Sari and Barfarosh.

Tribes.

The inhabitants of Ashraf are of mixed race; they are descendants of a Georgian colony, brought from the Caucasus by Shah Abbas Seffavi; some families of Talish, a Toork tribe from the coast near Lankeran: Tats, a Persan tribe, and a few houses of Godars, a peculiar race whose origin is very obscure. They are the "Pariah" caste of Mazanderan, having a status and occupation similar to those of the aboriginal tribes of India, the Coles, Bheels and Dares. They are village watchmen, hunters, fishermen, and, though nominally Mussulmans, live mainly on the flesh of wild swine. In summer they wander in the forest when not employed in watching the distant fields. In winter a small thatched cabin on the outskirts of some village shelters them and their families. They rarely marry Persian women, but their women, if pretty, are occasionally taken by Persians. From the specimens I saw, there can, I think, be little doubt of their Indian origin. The men are short and dark, but show a good deal of Persian blood. The women, of whom I saw two or three, are

short, dark, and slender, with irregular small features, and little, graceful figures. Their costume, very much that of Indian women of the lower castes. The children were very dark, and far more slender and spare than Persians. They appear to have no traditions of their origin, but I was not able to question any but young men of the tribe. They speak the Mazanderani dialect. The Governor of Ashraf is a native, by name Abbas Guli Khan, Sarhang (Colonel), who is also in charge of the irregular troops of the district, and has the customs contract for the ports of Gez and Mashed-i-Ser. From its situation, Ashraf should be unhealthy; it is enclosed in a hollow of the mountains formed by a projecting spur, on which stands the castle of Seffiabad. Fever, however, is not more prevalent than in other towns of the province. Cholera appears frequently, and is much dreaded. The famous garden of Shah Abbas is now entirely neglected; the buildings, fountains, and raised stone terraces in ruins. Its natural beauties are, perhaps, unequalled. It is backed by lofty wooded spurs, to the north is a fine view over the blue bay of Ashurada. Several springs rising under the hill slope flow through it. The cypress trees are of gigantic growth, and several of them covered with massive wreaths of wild vine. Orange and citron trees grow in wild luxuriance; their fruit is left to fall, and literally covers the ground; every house in the town being provided with its own garden or group of orange trees; there is no market, and it is worth no one's while to export. The old castle of Seffiabad has been replaced by a new building in the European style with fine rooms. It is decorated outside without taste in the Persian style, but commands a fine view of the bay and plain. It is already, even before completion, falling to ruin. Though now of little note, Ashraf should some day be the centre of one of the most important agricultural districts of Persia. Everything is there but the energy and capital which perhaps can only come from the west.

Climate.

Garden of Ashraf.

Seffiabad.

Karatuppa.

9th December. Ashraf.—Visited the village of Karatuppa, an Afghan colony planted by Nadir Shah on the Gurgan plain, and afterwards removed to its present location. The village is built around the base and on the slope of a mound, on the west angle of the bay of Ashurada, seven to eight miles north of Ashraf. It is surrounded by an extensive grassy plain in part marshy, but generally firm rich meadow land. It numbers now 150 houses, all Ghilzai Afghans. The villagers have lost their language and distinctive type, but not the ready hospitality of their countrymen, nor their love of country. Though exceptionally well off, they told me that they look forward to the day that will see their return to their distant mountain homes. They hold their lands free of revenue, and receive a yearly sum of 400 tomans (not always paid), the pay of 50 horsemen they are bound to keep up armed and equipped for border defence. They trade with the Turkoman coasts, owning six or eight large boats, and have also dealings with the Russians, whom they supply with live-stock, wheat, &c.

Strange Afghan at Kuratuppa.

Among the group of Persianised Afghans was one unmistakeable Afghan figure. A tall slim old man with a reddish grey

beard and the mild benevolent expression of eyes and countenance, not uncommon among the upper classes of Peshawur and Cabul. I had heard of a stranger staying in the village, a "Hakim," who had married and settled there two years before, and who lived no one knew how. He was credited with possession of the secret of converting copper into gold, for he paid for everything he bought in bright and new Russian Imperials. After some little delay, and as I thought with some reluctance, the "mystery" found his way to the house of one of the villagers whose guest I was. His greeting showed at once that I was not the first Englishman he had met. He shook me heartily by the hand, and expressed his delight at seeing one of my nation again, and mentioned the names of several Englishmen he had known, Burnes, Troup, Pottinger, and Thomson, late Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran. The account he gave of himself was straightforward enough, but still open to question. His father, Mirza Abdul Kareem, was Physician to Dost Mahomed Khan, and he himself had followed the fortunes of Azim Khan, had accompanied him to Persia after his defeat, and remained with him till his death at Shahrood. The Sirdar's son, Mahomed Sarwar Khan, having determined to leave Persia and go to Bokhara, contrary to his advice and that of all his friends, he left him and proceeded to Teheran, where he was introduced to, and kindly received by, Mr. Thomson; thence after some months he went to Asterabad to obtain a livelihood by practising his profession, and thence found his way to Gullogah, where he made the acquaintance of the men of Karatuppa, who, as he says, forcibly carried him to their village and gave him a house and wife. The latter is the weak part of his story, but it was fully borne out by the villagers. Even if true, there is cause to question his motive for remaining in seclusion. He has, he says, a son at Cabul, lands, wives, and houses, and lives only on the hope of some day being allowed to return. Why then should he take himself so completely out of reach? His natural residence, if his story be accepted, would be either Mashad, Teheran, or India. I could arrive at no satisfactory explanation; either he is hopelessly committed with the present Ruler of Afghanistan, or he has some secret business for which the quiet sea-side village is convenient. In spite of suspicion, there was a frankness and honesty in the old man's manners that opposed the latter alternative, and no inquiries that I was able to make subsequently threw any light on the matter. After a long conversation I took leave of him and of the hospitable villagers. If not already retained, the Hakim would be a very useful agent, and his position an excellent one. I took charge of a letter to his son, Abdool Ghani, living at Cabul, and promised to forward it and any reply that might be sent. If desirable a communication might thus be opened.

Nothing is known of this man at Teheran. (Sd.) G.C.N.

I had proposed to visit the new Russian fort on the peninsula of Miankullar, an hour's sail with a fair wind across the west angle of the bay from Karatuppa, but found that a delay of at

Miankullar.

least another day or two would be necessary. The fort which is visible from Karatuppa is a mere outpost commenced four or five years ago, and lately completed and armed with two light guns. A guard of 40 or 50 militia is maintained there ostensibly to prevent the Turkomans from landing and going across to the forest which covers the narrow spit of land and stretches away to the foot of the mountains and along the shore to the principal ports and towns of Mazanderan. The real history of its origin I heard from the Afghans, and afterwards heard confirmed by the Deputy Governor of the district. At the time of the Shah's visit to Mazanderan, he was met by the Russian officials from the Caspian ports, who made a request for a small grant of land on the end of the spit, a few miles from the present fort. This was refused, and the fort built to prevent any surreptitious occupation. Ashurada is known to be most unsuited for a permanent Naval or Military station. The water is bad, and extent of ground limited, and liable to be submerged during northerly gales. The sea rose lately over a great part of the north shore of the island, flooding many of the houses and doing much damage.

The peninsula of Miankullar ("kullur" signifying dry land in the Mazanderani dialect) is 30 to 40 miles in length and to three and four in breadth, and has ample water, timber, and forage. It is uninhabited and uncultivated. Game is said to abound in the forest, which is preserved as a royal "chase."

10*th December. To Nikkah,* 16 *miles.*—Marched to the village of Nikkah on the banks of the stream of the same name, which rises in the Shahkoh mountain and flows into the sea 12 miles west-north-west of Nikkah. The high road from Ashraf is in unusually good order; in place of the rough boulder pavement it is laid down in gravel, and is well raised, drained and fenced. It has the advantage, however, of running through an open cultivated country and over dry hill skirts. The Nikkah stream is spanned by a fine bridge in perfect order. The village of Nikkah, the principal place in that Belook, has 150 to 200 houses and farms scattered about over the cultivated land on both banks of the river. The people are Geraeli Toorks, of which tribe there are six other villages in the Belook. A large village, Nowzarabad, lies at the mouth of the stream, but there is no port, the nearest being Meshed-i-Sur, further west on the Babil stream. East of the head of the Miankullar peninsula the forest commences again, and extends along the coast as far as the eye can reach. It is broken only by clearings. The bare marshy plains of Ashraf were probably, till very lately, covered by the shallow waters of the bay, the deposits of salt from which prevent the growth of the usual luxuriant vegetation of the coast. The shore for many miles is flat, and is submerged for some distance inland during northerly gales. The water of Karatuppa, and of other villages on the plain, is brackish, and most of the vegetation indicates a saline soil.

Cotton. The mountain slopes to the right of the high road are to some

extent cleared of forest and cultivated. This I found was a result of the American war and the famine, by which the demand for cotton and wheat was greatly increased. The price of cotton at that time rose to 40 tomans per kharwar of 40 Tabriz maunds, the normal price being 7 to 8. Production still pays, and is increasing.

The Mazanderan peasant is a proprietor and owns his land absolutely. He is only restricted by custom from sale. Even the forest lands which are "common" are inalienable. Such a tenure, though a great incentive to individual exertions, is an obstacle to development of the resources of the country. An ignorant and poor peasantry without capital and an apathetic and feeble government can never raise the country above its present level, while the difficulty or impossibility of acquiring land would bar western enterprise and capital. Land tenure.

Mazanderan, the province of Persia with the greatest natural resources and most industrious population, and the most perfect security, pays, I was told, barely 40,000 tomans = 16,000*l.* into the Royal treasury.

11*th December.* *To Sari,* 18 *miles.*—Marched from Nikkah to Sari, the principal town of the province and the seat of Government. After crossing the Nikkah stream the high road, which is in remarkably good order, and has the appearance in places of a wide well-kept well-hedged Englished metalled road, turns south and clinging to the hill skirts bends in a wide curve west to the banks of the Tejen river. The country on either hand is open and well cultvated; the fields small, with wide hedgerows of white thorn, gates and stiles. A good deal of labour is evidently expended on the land, but it is nevertheless usually dirty. The small light plough of the country fails to eradicate weeds and undergrowth. A clear field is only to be seen near the homesteads in the distant and newly cleared lands. One year's fallow produces a dense growth of thorn and weeds, that can only be got rid of by fire. To the right of the road low forest-covered hills stretch away east and south for 50 or 60 miles, gradually rising to the high ridge running from Demavend to Shahkoh, which shows a continuous line of snow peaks. To the left five to six or eight miles distant is the forest extending from the peninsula of Mian-kullar into the Sari district. The Tejen is a fine stream flowing over a sound gravelly bed 200 to 250 yards wide. It was full but not flooded, and fordable everywhere. It rises in the mountains west of Shahkoh, draining the Hazar Jureeb plateau, enters the plain of Sari four to five miles above the town, and 16 to 17 miles from the sea. At its mouth is the village of Farahbad, formerly a large town, now a small port frequented only by native trading boats. In the estuary is one of the principal sturgeon fisheries on the coast, farmed with the other fisheries of the province to a Russian company for the annual sum of 68,000 tomans. Agriculture. The Tejen River.

Crossing the Tejen by a well-built stone bridge of 17 arches a neatly laid paved causeway leads to the town of Sari.

Town of Sari. *12th December.*—Sari is now a flourishing town in a state very different from that described by Frazer. Externally there is probably little change, its defences consisting still of a ditch with low rampart of easy slope, and cut down by traffic in many places. Originally it must have been sufficiently protected, for the ditch is still in places wide and deep and the rampart of imposing profile, with some sort of provision for flanking fire in the shape of short irregular bastions and salients. Even from the crest of the parapet hardly anything is to be seen of the town, the low houses being buried in masses of orange trees. There are four gates, the Barfarosh, Astrabad, Farahabad, and Chil Dukhtaram. The second only is in good repair, having a guard-house with two towers roofed with tiles in a style similar to that represented in drawings of Chinese or Thibetan towns. Within the town there is an appearance of neatness, order, activity, and prosperity quite unusual in Persia. The houses are, for the most part, well built, clean and spacious, each having its yard and group of orange trees. The streets are well paved, drained, and provided with raised footpaths on either side. There are exceptionally bad places, but they are exceptional, and not the rule as in all other towns. The bazars are covered and kept clean, and the shops well-stocked. The market place is a sight worth seeing in the East. It would lose little by comparison with the "Kermess" of Quimper or Pau; less order and cleanliness, few women, no gendarmes, and red-breeched slouching conscripts, but an ample display of country produce and cheap foreign wares set out in tempting array. The stalls were for the most part covered with clean white tents, and the vendors silent and business-like and not inactive. The fruit and butchers' stalls were particularly well provided. The town has no special industry, but almost all the wants of the country are provided for; a rough white cloth, known as "kattan" and silk stuffs are woven, and a good deal done in leather work. The mosques are neat and picturesque, with deep eaved red tiled roofs, carved wooden pillars and joists, squares of green turf and lines of orange trees. Repair and paving of streets was, I found, in the hands of the "Kelanters" or headmen of the six quarters or mohullas, a sort of municipal committee, receiving little aid from the Governor, and dependent on the town for funds. Of the population of 15,000 to 16,000 a large proportion are only winter visitors, driven in from the mountain pastures and the villages near the summit of the range. A large number of Firoz Kohis come down to work in the farms, brickyards and bazars during winter. They are easily distinguished by their ruddy healthy colours from the sallow haggard citizens and peasants of the marshy forest-covered plain.

Trade. The trade of Sari has much increased of late years, cotton and wheat being exported in exchange for European goods. Silk, formerly a great staple, has declined, I was credibly informed, as a result of trafficking with the infidels at Astrakhan, to which port large quantity of eggs used to be sent. Much of the goods displayed was from Western Europe. English piece-goods, French

sugar, and German chinaware and broadcloth. The Russians have a good hold on the market, but not a monoply. With better roads across the mountains English goods from Ispahan should supply more than a fair share of the market. The reputation of our goods is unrivalled, but their price is comparatively too high.

The population of Sari is of mixed origin: the Taths or Persians probably predominate, Toorks, Koords, and some few hundred Bungashis, Afghans, and Turkomans making up the list. The Governor, Mirza Masih Moiz-u-Dowla, is a native; his authority extends directly only over the eastern parts of the province; he has also a nominal authority over the coast or maritime tribe of Turkomans, the principal of which is the Ogurjily, a branch of the Jaffir Bai. Beyond the exaction of a light tax on trading boats they are not interfered with.

Adina or Anakhan, an Afghan of Karatuppa, who was one of Vambery's friends, visited me, and gave me much interesting information. He holds the contract for the levy of duties on native boats trading to the coast, and is agent of the Governor with the coast Turkomans. I learned from him that even the Jaffir Bais are most unwilling subjects of Russia, and still look upon themselves as feudatories of the Shah. Much trouble is taken by the Russians to win them; orders and presents being sown broad-cast. Anakhan would be found a willing and very useful agent.

13*th December.* *Seid Mohalla,* 13 *miles.*—Marched from Sari to Seid Mohalla over a bad village track winding through wet fields and marshy forest, the main or Shah Abbas Road being reported to be impassable.

Ogurjaly Turkomans.

Before leaving Sari received a visit from some Turkomans of the Ogurjaly, Jaffer Bai tribe, living at Hassan Gooli on the north bank of Attrek, eight miles from Chekishlar (a point occupied by the Russians at the time of their advance on Khiva, and now abandoned), and thence Russian subjects. The Ogurjaly neither cultivate nor rear cattle. They are traders and sailors, and thus tied to the sea. With a violent objection to becoming Russian subjects, they appear to object still more strongly to removing to the damp, hot, unhealthy country bordering the sea south of the Attrek. They frankly admitted that they believed the Russians to be better masters than the Persians; but the latter they know, and know exactly what treatment to expect from them; while the former are strangers, and have new ways of approaching them and dealing with them.

The Russian Governor has, probably without knowing it, excited the suspicions of the simple and credulous Turkomans by proposing to instruct their children. They see only some deep laid scheme, adverse to their liberty and religion, at the bottom of such a very strange suggestion. With the light hold the Russians yet have on the vagrant tribes, the measure presents itself as at least premature.

Another custom of the Russians, quite contrary to anything the "Aksakals" have ever seen practised by the "civilised" Persians,

is to take a receipt for every present (not only of money) given by them. This has caused all sorts of speculations, and it is suggested that the value of the presents is, at some future time, when the net has been closed round them, to be taken back!

14th December. To Barfarosh, 12 miles.—Marched to Barfarosh, 12 miles, across a very wet swampy country, with a few scattered homesteads, and some rice cultivation in forest clearings.

Town of Barfarosh.

Barfarosh is the commercial capital of Mazanderan. It has not regained the losses in population suffered during the plague in 1832, but it is still a large town, and its trade must have very much increased within the last few years.

The town is open, and the houses much scattered and concealed by masses of orange and other dark foliaged evergreens. From the east it is approached across a fine expanse of meadow land. The houses are low, neatly white-washed or painted, with deep eaved, red tile roofs. Each has a small court, enclosed by a high mud wall, coped either with tiles or a line of gilliflowers, the broad leaves of which act as a thatch. The streets are narrow but clean and well paved, and the shops and bazars well built, and full of European goods, both English and Russian. There are said to be 12,000 houses, which would give a population of 50,000 to 60,000, and this is, I dare say, not far over the mark. Beyond the bazars the houses are so much scattered that it would be difficult to form any idea of the size of the town, but it covers a large extent of ground, and the commercial parts are much crowded. Five thousand tomans is the revenue now taken from the town, raised principally by a tax on trades. The whole sum being distributed over the different guilds, whose representative is the collector. No octroi is levied.

The port of Mashad-i-Sar, eight miles distant, is said to be frequented by numbers of Russian ships, which monopolise the trade with the Caspian ports; native craft trade only with the Turkomans and the island of Cheleken. A mail steamer calls every seventh day, and takes up passengers and light cargo for Baku and Astrakhan. In spite of this connecting link with the civilised world, it is as ill provided with news and as indifferent to it as are other parts of Persia. The Russians have a Vice-Consul (a native of Shiraz) at Barfarosh to look after the interests of their merchants, a few of whom reside in the place. The staple exports from Barfarosh and the district are dried fruits, which are brought from across the mountains, cotton, and silk, and rice, chiefly raised in the district. The returns are in cloth, goods of various kinds, hardware, and glass. Sugar-cane of an inferior quality and hemp are also grown in the district, but are not exported.

Between the town and the Balul river is a Royal garden on an island in the centre of small lake filled by the overflowings from the river at certain seasons. There are remains of a channel by which a constant supply was kept up, but this is now choked up and useless. The garden and buildings are in the usual ne-

glected condition, but there is a fine view of the peak of Demavend, the lower ranges, and the well-wooded plain.

15*th December*. *To Amol*, 20 *miles*.—Marched to Amol, 20 miles south-west of Barfarosh. The Babul river, one mile from the town, is crossed by a fine stone bridge, built by Mahomed Hassan Khan, a former Governor. The stream is deep, with a slow current and treacherous bottom. A few hundred yards above the bridge is the junction of the Babul and Kari, a stream flowing from the mountains south-west. Between the Balul and Amal a great extent of country is cultivated with rice, and irrigated by numerous cuts from the Haraz river. There are also wide stretches of scrub jungle, thorny and impenetrable. A more difficult country over which to move either horse, foot, or guns, it would be difficult to find, for even the tilled portion is fenced with wide straggling hedges and deep dykes. Babul river.

The town of Amol is open and screened from view on approach by dense groves of orange trees. It lies on both banks of the Haraz, a fine stream flowing rapidly and noisily over a gravel bed. It is spanned by a solid stone bridge of 12 arches, built by the townspeople, which is probably in this respect unique. Before the great plague the town was a place of some importance, and had a population of, it is said, 50,000. To some extent it has recovered, but it lacks the stimulus given by an increasing and active trade with the Russian coasts enjoyed by the towns nearer the ports of Mashad-i-Ser and Gez. Its population is now not more than from 4,000 to 5,000 souls. Town of Amol.

16*th December*. *To Parosh*, 19 *miles*.—From Amol the road to Teheran lies due south up the valley of the Haraz. Near the foot of the hills rice cultivation ceases, and the plain and hill skirts are covered with heavy forest. The lower portions of the forest still retained their foliage with the tints of autumn, while higher up the trees were bare. Large quantities of mistletoe is cut and carried to the villages from these forests, and used as winter food for cattle. In the gorge of the Haraz is the commencement of a new road, constructed on the European plan, and intended to be made practicable for wheeled traffic between Mazanderan and the capital. The forest has been cleared, and some labour expended in blasting and cutting, but the building is very inferior, and cannot last more than a season or two. There are several large walls already showing extensive gaps owing to defective foundation, and two bridges have been carried away, the masonry exposed being of the worst possible description. The width of the road and the gradients are very irregular, but it is nevertheless a vast improvement on the old dangerous track, and if completed and kept open will prove an immense boon to the country. Parasb is a mere roadside station, having for public accommodation a number of caves cut in the face of a gravel bank near the river. A private house, belonging to the Governor of Larijan, is available for travellers. There is little cultivation in the lower part of the valley, and no villages, the nearest being in Shah's new road.

the Chillah glen, where there are six outlying villages of the district of Sari.

17*th December*. *To Baijan, 23 miles.*—From Parosh the road follows up the course of the Haraz to Baijan, a small village, distant 23 miles. The valley is enclosed by high spurs from the lofty ridges of the main chain, the lower slopes generally precipitous and inaccessible. The forest extends for four or five miles along the upper slopes, and gradually ceases, giving place to scattered groups of juniper. The new road is for the most part incomplete, but so far presents no serious difficulties, with a little labour and care there is nothing to prevent its being kept open at all seasons. Two of the new bridges appear to be well built and substantial, but they span only the minimum volume, the flood being intended to find its way round on either side. At Kulloo-bund, half-way is the head-quarters of the Persian sappers employed on the road. In place of tents the caves cut in a gravel bank and used as caravanserais were allotted to them, and made very comfortable winter quarters. These banks of gravel are the characteristic feature of the Haraz valley. They vary from 10 to 50 and even 100 feet in height, and fill every angle of the stream, seeming to mark its former level. They are formed of gravel of all sizes; in parts water-worn, the deposit of the numberless mountain torrents, and in parts angular, the collection of centuries of disintegration of the precipitous slopes bounding the river by the action of frost, snow, and rain. Many of the banks are now above the highest flood level of the stream and consequently permanent. In these long lines of caves have been excavated. There are four such stations, and it is calculated that they shelter no less than 400 or 500 mules, with numerous travellers every night.

Gravel banks.

18*th December*. *To Rahna.*—Above Baijan the valley narrows, the mountain slopes close in and become more precipitous till at a distance of 2 to 2½ miles, they form the defile known as the Mullik Bund, which passes for half mile between walls of rock rising to 200 and 300 feet perpendicular height, and divided by a space of 15 to 20 yards only at the narrowest point. The new road is being cut sheer into the face of the cliff, and the Persian engineers have taken their task boldly in hand, and will apparently make a creditable work of it. There are traces at the narrowest point of an old road and two old bridges, very curious relics. The road was carried along the face of the cliff, which is like a wall without any cutting. In places it is built up from the bed of the stream, in others on what must have been shaky foundations afforded by chance ledges. On reaching an angle it was found apparently impossible to turn it, and there being a convenient ledge of a few feet, a bridge of one span was thrown across the chasm at a height of 30 feet above the stream, the portion of the arch still clinging to the face of the cliff shows that it had a width of not more than three feet, with the form of a half moon. As a monument of primitive and yet ingenious engineering, it is to be regretted that

The Mullik Bund defile.

Old road and curious bridge.

it has not remained intact. The road can never have been wide enough to give passage to a laden mule. They were probably, as at the present day on the existing road, unladen, and the loads carried over by hand. Preparations are being made for a rock carving in the ancient Persian style, which is to commemorate the opening of the road. From what I saw I think it probable that the artist will have ample time to complete the Shah's sculpture and an inscription of any length he wishes. The road is to be open for the Shah's visit to Mazanderan in the spring, but this is absolutely impossible.

Above the defile the valley opens out, and there are several large villages in the glens opening into it. These are now, for the most part, deserted, the inhabitants having left for their winter farms in Mazanderan. There are a certain proportion of permanent residents who cultivate the scanty corn lands fringing the base of the precipitous ridges, which rise on all sides to a great elevation. The district, which is known as Larijan, is said to contain 40,000 families, of which three-fourths migrate every winter, having their lands on the plain of Amol.

Hot springs Demavend.

On clearing the Mullik Bund pass the peak of Demavend first appears towering above the valley and dwarfing the high peaks around it. High up in a glen on its eastern slope is the village of Garm-ab, where are some hot springs, much used by the natives for almost every bodily ailment from which they suffer. The stones in the bed of the small stream, fed by the spring, are covered with a thick deposit of sulphur, with which the water is highly impregnated. The springs have been resorted to by members of the European Missions at Teheran, and found highly efficacious in certain cases. There is a bath and indifferent accommodation in the village, but unlimited ground for tents. No better place could be selected as a base of operations for an ascent of the peak. Rahna is a large village of 200 houses, lying 1,000 to 1,200 feet above the Haraz. The new road passes through it, reaching it by a succession of ziz-zags, rising 1,000 feet in a distance of about one mile.

Village of Ask

20th December. To Ah.—From Rahna the road descends again to the level of the river, passing the village of Ask, the principal one of the district, numbering nearly 500 houses. In winter it is almost entirely deserted. The new road beyond this point has almost arrived at completion according to the standard up to which the engineers are working, but there is still a great deal to be done to make it a permanent and reliable highway. Drainage has been entirely neglected, and the loose slopes of volcanic rocks at the base of Demavend are everywhere unrevetted and will be a source of constant trouble. About 20 miles from Ask the road crosses and finally leaves the valley of the Haraz, and ascending a lateral glen crosses the highest point on the road, the Pass of Imamzada Hashim, about 7,500 feet above sea level. Four miles from the crest of the pass is the lake of Demavend, a large deep mountain torrent fed by springs, about which wonderful stories were told me. I have no doubt that it would pay scientific

survey with the view of utilizing its water for the irrigation of the plain below Demavend. Ah is a large village at the head of the Roodihind stream. In spring or summer it may deserve its reputation for its beauty and the luxuriance of its vegetation, but in winter it looks, with its snow covered hills and lines of bare willows and poplars, desolate enough. I was hospitably entertained, and lodged in a very handsome room by a Haji, who had travelled to Constantinople, Bombay, and Calcutta, and returned only to assert that, for wealth and magnificence, there was no city in the world like Teheran.

21*st December. To Teheran.*—From Ah a good bridle path leads down stream past the village of Roodihind and Boomahind, where it crosses a small stream by a dilapidated stone bridge. The direct road from Demavend to Teheran is met at this point, five miles, from Ah, thence a ride of 25 miles brought us to Teheran.

Diary kept by Kazee Syud Ahmad at Asterabâd, from 7th to 23rd November 1874.

7*th November. Marched to Tash.*—At 7 a.m. I left caravan on the road to Teheran and turned back in the direction of Asterabad. Having no guide, I with some trouble found the right road, and skirting Shahrood, gained the Bostam plain. Thence the road turns north-west, passing the village Kelat-i-Shamsab, lying at the foot of the hills in a grove of "sinjads" (sweet willows). Leaving the village the path turns south across a broad plain enclosed by hills capped with snow, traversed by the rivulet of Shahrood, which is joined a few miles higher up by the water of a brackish spring from the west. Then the road passes a small valley with steep slopes, through which the above mentioned rivulet runs. On one side of the stream there is a caravanserai in almost dilapidated state, and on the other side of it there are two small "kutcha" buildings with no doors, made by farmers, for securing their grain, hay, &c. At the end of this valley the road leads up to a narrow pass; the hills on either side are clothed with cypress. At about one farsakh a road branches off to Shah Koh on the left, and at about one mile more the village of Tash lies, where I arrived at 2 o'clock and put up in the house of one Karbalai Mahomed. The village contains about 70 families, all Fars. Before reaching the village there is a small brook to be crossed, which joins the Shahrood stream.

8*th November. Halt.*—Owing to a heavy fall of snow I was obliged to stop at Tash to-day. In conversation with the owner of the house I learned that Sohrab, the Armenian merchant at Asterabad, last year took "morakabat" (oranges, limes, and shaddocks) and other presents from the Consul for the Eelkhanee, Yar Mahomed Khan, of Bujnoord. The Khan gave the Armenian a horse and several other things to the value of 200 tomans. I also heard that Sohrab has since last year opened trade with Bujnoord and other places in Koordistan, where he has been now two months.

9th November. Foot of Koozluk Pass.—At 8 a.m. left Tash. The road was all covered with snow, and small brooks all frozen over. Having gone through a pass for an hour came to Kotal-i-Wajmaivoo, then to Kabr-i-Sofaid, then to Hasht Chashmah, and then to Sootroo Bar. At about two miles from this last place the road ascends the summit of a hill called Kotal-i-Jaling, and then descends the plain of Rabat-i-Sofaid. Having passed this caravanserai, which lies to the left, came to the place where the village of Aliabad stood, and then came to Kotal-i-Koozlook which has a descent of about two farsakhs. At the foot of this mountain a dense forest commences, and extends to the vicinity of Asterabad. There being no village or place of accommodation whatever I put up with some charwadars (muleteers) in the jungle. As it was in the open air and the ground wet, we kept up fires the whole night.

10th November. Arrive at Asterabad.—Left halting place in the forest at 8 a.m. and at 12.30 entered Asterabad by the Bostam gate. The road passes through dense forest, and is deep and wet; wild animals abound. Inquiring the way to the caravanserai I was directed to the serai of Haji Nakki, where I secured a room and remained the rest of the day. I found myself unnoticed and unquestioned.

11th November.—Went to the shop of one Mahomed Ismail, foreign merchant, at the gate of the caravanserai. Mahomed Ismail, who was himself in the shop, stood up on my entrance and giving me a seat asked me politely whence and who I was. I replied that I had just come from Mashad-i-Mokaddas, and purposed awaiting the arrival of some travelling companions. This satisfied the merchant, and we conversed for some time on different subjects. Meantime some Turkomans of the Kalta Tirah Jafir Bai, regular customers of Mahomed Ismail, came to the shop; one of them told Mahomed Ismail that 400 Russians had arrived on the Attrek, and purposed building a fort on the banks of the river with the intention of making it a base for further operations against Kari Kalla and other settlements of the Tekkah Turkomans. Russians on the Attrek.

Shortly after Mahomed Ismail asked me if I had any knowledge of medicine. I said that I had some slight knowledge, and at his request accompanied him to his house and saw his daughter, who was lying ill with fever, and prescribed for her. At the time I took my leave the merchant testified his gratitude by a present of two knives which, he said, were Russian, but bore the name of an English firm.

12th November.—To-day being the Eed (festival) of Ramazan, Mahomed Ismail, my acquaintance, sent over for me, asking me to go with him to the mosque to pray, and after prayers have a breakfast with him in his house. Accordingly I went over to the mosque, and after prayers I accompanied the merchant to his house and breakfasted with him. During the time I stayed with him I learned the names of all the sections and teerahs of the Turkoman tribe of the Yemoot, which are as per list annexed. Yemoots.

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Subject to Russia.

Of these divisions the merchant told me that Egdar, Aruq, Koosali, Oghoorjali, Toomaj, and Koor were subject to Russia, and the rest to the Persian Government.

Persian revenue from Yemoots.

The amount of revenue which the Yemoots pay to the Persian Government is said to be 1,200 tomans, but this is merely nominal, since they give nosebags, saddles, saddle and mulebags, and the like in lieu of the money, and set a price on them themselves. These things are afterwards sold by the Governor, and never fetch more than 400 or 500 tomans. The Persian Government feels contented with all this, fearing lest they, the Yemoots, should submit themselves to Russia. The Russian Government on the other hand treats the Turkomans, their subjects, with kindness, in order to win their affection. Formerly there was a duty taken on naphtha and salt which they brought from Chalakan, but lately they abolished the tax. The merchant then remarked that all these lenient measures on the part of Russia would cease when the Turkomans have been completely subdued, and at that time she would think of imposing a capitation tax on them, assessing their lands and taxing their trade. He also mentioned that during the Khivan war Colonel Markossoff took 1,800 camels from the Yemoots. The Toomaj furnished more than any other teerah. At first they all refused to provide any camels, and even some teerahs of the Jafir Bai came within one farsakh of Astrabad near Imarat-i-Shahi in the hope of receiving assistance from the Governor, but the Russians followed them. This circumstance created a great alarm in Asterabad, so much so that the people began to think that Russia was going to take Asterabad. The Governor at once telegraphed to Teheran reporting the whole circumstance to the Shah, and was directed to collect the chiefs of the Turkomans in Aq Qala and give them khilluts and presents to prevent their turning Russian subjects.

Conciliatory policy of Russia.

Refusal to furnish camels to Markossoff.

Violation of Persian territory.

It was also decided at this time that the River Gurgan should be the boundary between the Russian and Persian territories, namely, the Jafir Bai on this side of the river should be recognized as Persian subjects, and those on the other side the Russian.

Policy of Russia to increase the influence and importance of leading Turkomans.

I also learned from the same merchant that the Russian General after taking Khiva took the chiefs of the Jafir Bai to Badkoba, and gave them presents, varying from 100 imperials to 50 in value, in accordance with the position and standing of each chief. And as the greater number of the camels belonged to the Toomaj, as already mentioned, he gave 5,000 tomans to Aba Bai, the chief of that teerah, to distribute amongst the owners of the camels. The people of Astrabad do not like the submission of the Yemoots to Russia, since they say that the teerahs which have been made over to Russia are more powerful, wealthy, and valiant than the other sections, nor are the lower classes of the Yemoots pleased with the change, for the privilege of receiving presents and khilluts is exclusively enjoyed by the headmen, and at the time of war the lower classes are called upon to furnish camels, provisions, and slaughter cattle, for which they afterwards either receive nothing or scarcely half the price, the whole or

greater part being taken by the headmen and Aksakals (grey beards).

I have heard the opinion expressed by a most reliable authority that the Persian Government will soon regret making over the finest portion of her Turkoman subjects to Russia, for some day Russia will turn her arms against Persia, and employ these Turkomans in war.

Disputes settled by Kazees.

Turkomans, whether subject to Russia or Persia, refer all their causes and disputes amongst themselves to their own Kazees (Judges) and Aksakals (grey beards) for decision. However, if a Turkoman is wronged by a Persian, and he is a Persian subject, he applies to the Persian Governor for redress, and if he is a Russian subject, to the Russian Consul.

Duties of Consul.

The Consul at Asterabad has otherwise nothing to do with the Turkomans. He protects trade, and is the medium of communication between the Russian authorities both on land and on the sea, and the Persian Governor at Asterabad in matters touching the frontier. It also forms part of his duty to watch closely the movements of any foreigner who happens to be near the Turkoman borders. The Durya Begi (Commodore) and General Lamakyn have between them all the management of the Turkoman country. The presents to the Turkoman chiefs and influential men are also given by them.

Alleged defects of Russian administration.

Another merchant who came to the caravanserai this evening mentioned that Russia had a very good government, but the chief defects complained of in her system of administration were that she gave no appointments to foreigners, and there is little tolerance of other religions, and a fixed intention to convert her subjects to Christianity.

13*th November*.—To-day my fame as a hakim (physician) spread through the city, and I visited 11 patients, for whom I prescribed, and made eight krans.

I called on Mahomed Ismail, the merchant, this afternoon, and had a talk with him on different subjects. Amongst other things he mentioned that three days ago news was received to the effect that 8,000 Tekkahs made a raid on the Karanjeek Yemoots, killed a great many men, and carried away their women and property. This conduct of the Tekkehs, the merchant said, has been attributed to the instigation of the English Government, to which they have proffered their allegiance through the Ameer of Cabul. The Karanjeeks are one of the Yemoot sections which have been made over to Russia. The Tekkahs, it is said, unless encouraged and backed by the English could not venture to make predatory incursions on the Russian territory. Mahomed Sadiq, the Seraidar, who happened to be there at the time, mentioned that General Lamakyn with 400 men had come to the Attrek to select a site for a fort, and his object was to advance towards the Tekkehs gradually and capture Merve and Akhal. Whilst I was sitting with the above-named merchant Mahomed Hossein, broker, came in and joined us in the talk. He said that as Russia had now taken the extensive plain (Sahara-i-Turkoman),

Tekkeh raid attributed to English instigation.

Attrek Fort.

Opinions.

she would in a few years take Afghanistan and extend her conquests to Hindoostan. I said Russia cou'd not do so as the English would stop her approach to Afghanistan, and then how could she extend her conquests to Hindoostan? He replied, no, the English could not stop the progress of Russia. Russia has more men and England more money, and should war break out between Russia and England, Persia would side with Russia, the former being afraid of the latter, which could march 100,000 troops into Persia in a day and destroy the empire.

Consul Bakouline.

The presents which the late Consul used to send to the Khans and chiefs around consisted of sugar-loaves, broadcloths, watches, and other Russian goods, but the present Consul is known to be a stingy man. He only sends presents to the Governor and a few other principal men of Asterabad, and that also only on fixed occasions. Unlike his predecessor he does not mix himself up with people, nor does he give dinner parties. Presents are now sent by the Commodore and General Lamakyn to the neighbouring chiefs and Khans. Merchants of Asterabad and Mazanderan who trade with Russia get "billettes" (passports) from the Consul and without the billette no one is taken on board a ship.

The Yemoots in Khiva are in communication with the Yemoots in Persia. A Turkoman, named Ghaib, of the Ata Bai clan, came to the caravanserai to-day. I asked him if they had ever heard how it fared with their brethren in Khiva. He said he had two brothers there, who were much better off than himself, but they were not happy, as they were not well treated by the Russians. He also added that the Yemoots in Khiva looked to them for aid, but they were unable to lend them any assistance.

Water dispute referred to Russian authorities by Persian Yemoots.

I have heard from another Turkoman of the same clan to-day that their chiefs, hearing that the Russians give presents to the chiefs of the Jafir Bai Teerahs which are their subjects, wish to be handed over also to Russia and refer their matters of dispute to the Russian authorities which they ought to refer to their own Government (Persian). The other day, he said, for example, the Jafir Bai had cut off the Ata Bai's "bund" of water, and thrown a portion of it into the Attrek, and turned off a portion towards themselves. The chiefs of the Ata Bai ignored their own Government, and went over to General Lamakyn and applied to him for the restoration of their right. The General gave a willing ear to their complaint, and ordered the Jafir Bai to rebuild the bund and give the Ata Bai their share of water.

The Governor of Asterabad, Soleman Khan Afshar, is on very friendly terms with both the Consul and General Lamakyn. The Consul and Governor invite each other to dinner occasionally.

Views and opinions.

I went out for a stroll this evening in company with Mahomed Hossain, merchant, and Ismail, tailor, and when we got to the top of Qila Kandan, which affords a good view of the country around, the tailor exclaimed, what a pity it is that Persia has no master, otherwise thousands of tomans would have accrued from the produce of the forest to the Government Treasury. He then stated that he one day heard one of the Consul's servants say

that in a few years all this country would be taken by the Russians, who would realize lakhs of tomans from this forest. I then asked, "Do you expect that Russia will take Asterabad in a few years?" He replied we know it for certain that Russia would take Asterabad and all Persia to-morrow, if it were not for the British Minister's flag, which is planted in Teheran. I then said, is this true. He rejoined, certainly so, and stated that Russia and England were two rival powers, and had their Ministers in Teheran. The Russian Minister peeped out through his window every morning to see if the English flag was still on high, and finding it so, he is disappointed, but no sooner he will see the British flag hurled down, than he would telegraph to Russia to march troops into Persia, and make it a Russian province like Turkistan. This simple fancy of the tailor amused me very much and made me laugh.

14*th November.*—I called on Mahomed Ismail, merchant, this morning at his house, and heard the following from him:—Persia looks upon Russia as her great friend and ally, and expects her to relieve her in her distress, but such is not the case. Persia is quite mistaken. Russia at the first opportunity that offers, and the fear of the English dispelled from her mind, will annex Persia to her empire. The English are unable to cope with the Russians on land, but are more powerful in the sea, and before they could do any harm to Russia, Persia and Turkey would be taken by her.

Whatever feelings Persia may have towards Russia, yet it is certain that the latter places no confidence in the former, and is not even well disposed towards her as is evident from the following fact:—Russia on the capture of Khiva set thousands of Persian slaves free, most of these returned to Persia, but a small body being encumbered with families and property took up residence in the neighbourhood of Khiva. Russian authorities not deeming it advisable to let these people remain in Turkistan (lest they should revolt and disturb the country if at any time war broke out between their Government and the Persian) sent them off to Persia. These poor creatures on their way were attacked and plundered by the Yemoots. Then Mahomed Ismail gave an account of the market held in Russia every year. He and many other merchants of Asterabad go there every year. The place where the market is held is 22 days' journey from Asterabad. The market lasts 40 days and is held in Rajab and Shaban, corresponding to September and October. Merchants from all parts of Asia meet there and transact business; but this is not the sole object of the market. Russian officers collect information and find out what goes on in other countries, especially in India, Persia, and Afghanistan. Foreign merchants are well treated. Whilst talking to Mahomed Ismail, Mulla Aga Mahomed, the son of the late "Shariat Madar," one of the most influential Mullas of Asterabad, came in. I was introduced to him by Mahomed Ismail. Aga Mahomed staid there about two hours and talked on many subjects; one of these was that the Russian

Nijni Fair.

Object of Attrek Fort.

General had come on the Attrek to select a site for a fort, and that the object of the Russian Government was to direct an expedition against Merve and Akhal. He also mentioned that when the Russians wanted to build a fort, it did not take them long to do it. They brought over all materials from Astrakhan in ships, and the workmen were also their own, so that they completed a work in a much less time than other people would do it.

15th November.—Being ill with fever I have been unable to go out, and consequently heard nothing.

Visit to Atabai "Obah."

16th November.—I rode out to-day with a Turkoman, Kadde by name, of the Ata Bai Teerah, to his "Obah," which is near Kara-Soo (black-water), about two farsakhs from the town. This man often came to the caravanserai and became my friend. A few minutes after I got in his tent, he brought some bread, milk, and koorood (hardened curds), and placed them before me; I ate a little of them. His wife and daughter waited on me whilst I continued eating. Many women and children, the neighbours and friends of my host, came to see me. As I had told Kadde that I was an Afghan Sunnee, he called me "Qirdash," brother. This man repeatedly asked me how the King of Cabul was getting on, whom he called his "aqa" (master) next to the Sultan of Turkey, and often heaved deep sighs, that neither the one nor the other could rescue them from the hands of the Persians, for whom he expressed a great dislike. I staid about an hour and a half with my Turkoman friend, and then took my leave, giving his daughter five krans. He accompanied me as far as Zangi Mohalla, whence I thought I could go back to the town safely. At Zangi Mohalla I met a farmer, and asked him what the revenue of his village was. He replied as much as the Governor could exact. I said how could that be. He rejoined that Persia had no master: irregularity and disorder reigned everywhere. Had Persia had a master the plain of the Turkomans would not have been made over to Russia, which is so fertile that one maund of seed gives an out-turn of 100 maunds. He then said that the Turkomans were lucky that they became Russian subjects. They would no longer be subject to arbitrary exactions and experience the tyranny of Persian rulers. I then remarked how is it that you being a Mussalman prefer an infidel Government to your own. He answered Russians are much better than these Mussalmans (alluding to his Governors), and then said, "Go and see the Turkomans of Chakushlar and "Chalakund, how well off they are; they are getting richer "day by day." This man highly praised the Russians and their rule. He said that a single Russian could travel among the Turkomans without any risk, but the Sahib Ikhtiar himself could not go without 1,000 men to Ak Kala (two farsakhs).

A Persian's opinions on material benefits of Russian rule.

17th November.—I called on Mulla Aga Mahomed to-day and had a talk with him on different subjects. He stated that when Russians took a country they treated the people very kindly at first, but when they found their rule was established, they enforced new law and adopted severe measures, but did not interfere

with any man's religion. The English on the contrary held inducements to people and turned them Christians. I said that as far as I knew and heard of all European nations, the English, French, Russians, &c., I could tell that none of them forced people to embrace their religion, but certainly in all European countries there was a freedom of thought, so much so that any man could give up his religion with impunity.

18*th November.*—I again called on Aga Mahomed to-day and learned from him the names of all the Belooks and revenue of Asterabad. Aga Mahomed is the proprietor of the village of Mahomed Abad, and he is well up in such things.

19*th November.*—I heard nothing worth noting to-day.

20*th November.*—I went out this morning to visit the shrine of Imamzadah Abdoollah, and saw one Syud Hossain in the shrine. I asked him who this Imamzadah was. He said the brother of the 8th Imam Reza at Meshed. I then asked him if he had the honor of visiting the shrine of the 8th Imam. He replied that he had not, being too poor to afford the expenses of the road. Then I said what a nice thing it would be if there were a railway: people then could go to Meshed from here in a day. He said, certainly so, but "*Russi padar sukhta*" (accursed Russia) stopped railways being made in Persia by bribing the Ministers and Mujtahids, because the English were going to make them. I have heard this very thing from more than one man in this country, and even from an Armenian, Lazar by name, a Russian subject, who travelled with us from Subzwar to Shahrood. The Resht Railway.

21*st November.* *Designs against Karakalla.*—I heard from a Turkoman, Solaiman by name, of the Kalta Teerah, who came to the caravanserai to-day, that the Russian General had given them notice to keep one camel for each family in readiness, as an expedition against Karakalla was soon to be undertaken. After the capture of Karakalla, he said, they proposed to advance to Akhal and Merve. He also mentioned that the Tekkehs of Akhal were quite disposed to become Russian subjects, since the Persian Government has stopped their trade.

22*nd November.*—Mahomed Sadiq, the Seraidar, came into my room at 1 o'clock to-day and asked me where my companions, whose arrival I awaited, would put up when they got in. I said I did not know. He said that the merchants of Sermian, who were putting up in the opposite rooms, were going to leave this evening, and if I knew for certain that my companions would put up in the caravanserai he would not let anybody occupy those rooms. I said I did not think my companions would put up in the caravanserai; they were too big for it. He then said, who they were? I replied an English officer with several servants. No sooner Mahomed Sadiq heard this than he went to the British Agent, who, I afterwards found was his friend, and told him that there was a man, a servant of the English Government, in the caravanserai, who had been there for a fortnight, and nobody knew who he was. In half an hour's time the Visit of Acting British Agent.

British Agent, Mahomed Takki, accompanied with Mahomed Sadiq and his servant, made his appearance in my room. After the interchange of customary civilities he asked me how it was that I had been there a fortnight and never called on him. I said three months ago I heard that the British Agent at Asterabad was dead, and was not sure whether another man was appointed to his place or not. He said that the late agent was his father, and he had been working in his place since his death. He then asked me to go over to his place, and put up there, as the caravanserai was not the place for me to stop in. I excused myself from going, but the more I excused myself, the more he urged, until at last I agreed to remove to his place the next day. Having exacted this promise from me he went away. Soon after he left I found myself surrounded by a crowd of people all speaking to me in a more civil way than before, so that I found I was not now the same person that I was before.

23*rd November.*—I called on my old friend Mahomed Ismail, at his house this morning, who also now knew who I was, and talked to him now in a less reserved manner than before. He mentioned that about three months ago General Lamakyn visited Asterabad, and was invited by the Sahib Ikhtiar (Governor) to a public entertainment at his house, and there was a large gathering of the grandees and Persian Government officials, to whom he delivered the following speech in the Russian language, which was rendered into Persian by the interpreter:—

Lamakyn's speech.

"Persian Government officers and subjects, be it known to you all that there is a great amity and friendship between your Government and ours, and the object of our Government is to inflict a punishment on the Turkomans, who have been troubling you in many ways from time immemorial. The reason why we have taken possession of this Sahra (plain) is, that whilst we protect you against the raids of the Yemoots, we should proceed to the Tekkah country and take vengeance on them for the damages they caused to your Government when Hashmat-ood-dowlah invaded Merve, and at the same time restore peace and tranquillity throughout Russian Turkistan, and achieve many other objects in view. I guard you against any other thoughts you might be led to give way to your minds. The chief object of our Government is that you should become strong and powerful, and in no way have any fear of your enemies round about you. The friendship which exists between your Government and ours is not of a day's standing, but old, and I confidently hope it will increase day after day."

Yemoot Tribe.

The Yemoots near Asterabad are said to be 60,000 families, 20,000 of which are settled near Asterabad. The part of the country which they inhabit extends from the Dahana-i-Hosain Koli, near the Caspian, to Gunbad-i-Quas, which forms the boundary between the tribes of Goklan and Yemoot; the rest are settled from Balkhan to Khiva.

They are divided into two divisions, *viz.*, 1. Chooni, and 2. Sharaf, better known as Ata Bai and Jafir Bai. Ata Bai is divided into two clâns, Ata Bai and Aq. Ata Bai has 15 Teerahs—

1. Sahna.
2. Taqi.
3. Yanpai.
4. Sari Chooni.
5. Mohamud Unluq.
6. Tanak.
7. Khanti.
8. Qagiti.
9. Qanqarma.
10. Tana.
11. Dogoonchi.
12. Kasarkha.
13. Kâsah.
14. Ashoor Gook.
15. Qara Dashli.

Aq has two clans, viz., 1, Uzain Aq, and 2, Qisqa Aq. Uzain Aq has three Teerahs:—

1. Shaqi.
2. Gook.
3. Habibli.

Qisqa Aq has five Teerahs:—

1. Shir Mohamudli.
2. Noor Mohamudli.
3. Qiziljah.
4. Yulma.
5. Hirra.

The tribes which are connected with Ata Bai are four in number:—

1. Daz.
2. Koochak.
3. Qan Yukhmaz.
4. Igdar.

Daz has four Teerahs:—

1. Panqa.
2. Hanqa.
3. Durd Ata Ughli.
4. Chin Subli.

Koochak has four Teerahs:—

1. Aslanjuq.
2. Ustajuq.
3. Khoortoom.
4. Gooti Qara.

Qan Yukhanaz has four Teerahs:—

1. Hatakoo.
2. Qulja.
3. Saricha Koor.
4. Makhdoom.

Igdar has four Teerahs:—

1. Aq Irkakti.
2. Qara Irkakti.
3. Bidraq.
4. Emir.

Jafir Bai is divided into two divisions, viz.:—

1. Yár Ali.
2. Noor Ali.

Yur Ali has nine clans :—

1. Arikh.
2. Kal.
3. Koosati.
4. Qizil.
5. Saqqati.
6. Burkhas.
7. Ide Toomàj.
8. Unuq.
9. Changan.

Noor Ali has eight clans:—

1. Qariwange Koor.
2. Pank.
3. Qaranjik.
4. Qaraja.
5. Ughurj ati.
6. Katita.
7. Bablaka.
8. Qulaq.

The tribes which are connected with Jafir Bai are five in number :—

1. Yalghi.
2. Daweji.
3. Qara Daqti.
4. Tatar.
5. Qujooq.

Yalghi has seven Teerahs :—

1. Siqra.
2. Qira.
3. Mirzati.
4. Watrilti.
5. Anliq.
6. Chirashak.
7. Ipri.

Daweji has nine Teerahs :—

1. Udak.
2. Miut (Meoot).
3. Ichmak.
4. Abdal.
5. Khivali.
6. Kirai.
7. Chobnash.
8. Buqu.
9. Gurganli.

Qara Daqli has seven Teerahs :—

1. Pahlawan.
2. Uzin.
3. Pira-an.
4. Yalitli.
5. Idakti.
6. Qalmuq.
7. Uroos.

Tatar has three Teerahs :—

1. Siqarli.
2. Aq Qimishli.
3. Aghilmishli.

Qujooq has six Teerahs :—

1. Kaka.
2. Khivachi.
3. Qarata.
4. Aqchati.
5. Qiriq.
6. Dan Qiriq.

No. 3.

Observations on the Topography of the Eastern Alburz Tract, with Notices on a few Places of Interest on the Persian Border.

From the latitude of Asterabad the Alburz Mountains continue in a serried unbroken line, eastward, for about 100 miles to the point where the Nowdeh valley cuts deep into the chain. Thence they spread out, forming a broad expanse of hilly country, extending north to the banks of the main branch of the Attrek, and east, for 70 miles. Mountain chains. Southern chain.

To the west, this tract is supported by the Koh Zirkay, which abuts on the Gurgan plain. A line of heights, connected by low ridges, divide it from the Jah Jerm plain on the south. It is traversed from east to west by numerous plateaux, more or less level, forming the Gurgan drainage basin, but draining also south to the desert, and north into the Attrek. Beyond the Koh Zirkay the range loses its covering of forest, and the hill slopes become bare and rugged, but the plateaux are for the most part fertile, well watered, and capable of supporting a considerable population. Nardin, the most western, has a small population; but those to the east, the plateaux of Kalposh and Dasht, draining to the Gurgan; Murtaza Ali Maidan, Shoughan, to the south; Simulghan to the north and south are completely desolate, and form between Koord and Turkoman, a neutral ground, of which neither race is able to retain possession. From the Shoughan and Simulghan plateaux rises the Aladagh, a high mass of mountain, which, together with the Koh Salig to the south-east of about the same height and greater extent, drops its northern spurs into the plain of Bujnoord, and its southern spurs into the Jah Jerm or Isferayin plain.

East from Aladagh and Salig the range extends in a high unbroken line, falling abruptly into the plain of Isferayin, and with easy undulations into that of Koochan. Takht-nurza and Shahjehan, the two highest peaks, reach an absolute elevation of about 8,000 feet, while above the plains north and south they rise 5,000 feet and 4,000 feet respectively.

East of Shahjehan the range bends south-east, and is broken by the plateaux of Sultan Maidan, Bam, and Seffiabad. Rising from there, it forms a high mass known as the Koh-i-Mirabad, dividing the districts of Nishapoor and Mashad; falls again at Sherifabad, where the lower Mashad road crosses it, and continues south-east about 180 miles further to Bakharz, where it attains again a considerable elevation, and thence on in a broken line nearly to Shahbed on the Herat and Furrah road. This chain may be said to form the southern chain of the East Alburz.

The northern chain is connected with it by an open elevated tract, dividing the Mashad or Heri Rood basin from that of Koochan or the Attrek. A line of peaks stretches from a point 30 to 40 miles north of Bujnoord, along the "Atak," and thence Northern chain.

south-east towards Kelat, supporting to the south an elevated expanse of downs, of easy slope and culturable, reaching to the valley of Koochan and Sherwan; to the north, falling with a steep slope to the Atak, and throwing out north-west a line of heights, extending for about 100 miles into the desert, in low ridges and sand hills, but falling just short of junction with the Balkhan ridge, and the elevated pastures on the shore of that bay. Eastwards extend several long rugged spurs, the most northern one overhanging the "Atak," as far as Deregez, to the south of which it falls into the plain; a second, running north of Deregez, into the plain between Deregez and Abiverd, across which lies the pass of Allaho Akbar; a third, a low ridge, connecting with the Kelat range.

In the N.E. slopes of this line of peaks rises the Deregez stream, flowing to the Atak; in the S.W. the different tributary streams of the Attrek, enclosed by spurs, extending far into the Attrek-Gurgan plain.

East of the Allaho Akbar Pass the Kelat range extends S.E. for about 180 miles to the Heri Road, falling north into the Atak, south into the plain of Mashad. It has a uniform width of about 45 to 50 miles, and is exceedingly rugged in outline, the spurs running into the "Atak" being more precipitous and inaccessible than any other part of the whole range. The principal elevations, the Koh Imarat, Koh Tammas, Karadagh, and Tekkahkhana the last, eastwards, have a nearly uniform elevation of about 7,500 feet above sea level.

Valleys. The drainage of the East Alburz passes almost entirely to the west and north. South, the wide plain of Jouven, and Isferayin

Jouven. (which is divided only by a single narrow ridge), with a width of 30 to 40 miles, and a length, from the border of Nishapoor to Raibat, west of Jah Jerm, of about 130 miles, is drained by a single narrow and shallow channel known as the Kal-i-Shor, which flows under the Pul-i-Abreshm. The surface of the plain is level and the soil fertile, but from lack of water it appears sterile, and is little cultivated.

The Mashad plain has a width varying from 15 to 20 and 30 miles, and is surrounded by high mountains, but nevertheless its drainage feeds but one small stream, the Kashaf Rood, which rising in an extensive marsh near the village of Radkan flows for 50 miles to Mashad, and thence 80 miles to the Pul-i-Khatoon. Except in heavy flood, it is everywhere fordable. The few small streams flowing from the mountains are lost in the irrigation channels of the wide valley.

Gurgan valley. The perennial source of the Gurgan lies below the defile known as the Dehana-i-Gurgan, 30 miles N.W.W. of Jah Jerm, but a large tract of hilly country is included in its basin.

The plateau of Kalposh, high, well-wooded, watered, and fertile, the plateau of Dasht, low-lying and barren, but capable of cultivation, to the south, the Chanda Abbas plateau to the east, the Nardin basin and slopes of Koh Zirkay to the south-west, drain into it sending in spring a torrent through the Gurgan

defile. Below this defile (route 16) the Gurgan stream rises, and winds for 18 to 20 miles between enclosing hills to Gurgan, where the spur enclosing it on the right disappears in the plain, which opens to the west and north. On its banks are said to be fine woods and pastures.

Gurgan is described as an "olang," or meadow, wide and open, extending to the mountains on one hand, and to the Gurgan stream on the other. It has permanent camps, or settlements of the Goklan tribe, with cultivation, and plantations of mulberry. The valley above is not occupied, having been much exposed to raids of the Akhal Turkomans from Karakalla, whence there is a good bridle road from N.E. across the broken, mountainous country, intervening between the Attrek tributary streams. Gurgan pasture.

Below Gurgan, the Gurgan stream receives its last tributary brook from the north, but the hills bounding it in that direction extend for some distance further in broken undulations, and deep ravines furrow the slopes to the banks of the stream. Valley below Gurgan.

On the south bank, the surface of the valley appears less broken. The stream is distant some 16 to 18 miles from the base of the mountains, which are covered with dense forest, a belt of which gradually widening to the west intervenes between them and the plain. Thence to within a few miles of the sea the stream flows in a deep bed, the valley widening out to the south and merging north into the Attrek plain. From the south it receives some trifling contributions from the Kalposh ridge, the streams Kerawul and Sangar, and the drainage of the Kohsar plateau, a high block of undulating table-land, supported at a height of 1,000 to 1,500 feet above the plain by the southern spurs of Koh Zirkay.

The plateau has a length of about 30 miles, with a width of 10 to 12. Ample wood and water, and most fertile soil, supporting without irrigation a population said to number 7,000 families. The largest villages, Dezain, Farang, Poursyan, have 1,000 houses each.

It is protected on all sides by precipitous heights from the Turkomans in the plain below. Two deep valleys drain it, one running from Poursyan, in which flows the Tara stream, the other known as the Hajilar "Durra," or glen, from a tribe of that name located there; a third small stream falls into the Nowdeh stream at Kanchi (Route 17).

Though of small extent, the plateau has many special points of interest, suspended, as it is, midway between the fine plain of Gurgan and the main range of Alburz, rising to 8,000 feet; its climate and scenery are magnificent. Its population bears perhaps a larger ratio to area than any other rural community in Persia, and, living as they do within sight of the Yemoots "obahs," the villagers enjoy the most perfect security and tranquillity; while their fellow subjects in Khorassan, protected by 200 miles of waterless desert, are daily carried off into slavery. As a cantonment for any force of European troops (or even of Persian troops for unless natives they suffer severely from the climate of Astera-

bad) holding the Gurgan-Attrek plain, no better spot is to be found on the whole range.

Lower valley.

From Gurgan to the Gunbuz-i-Kaoos, between the mountains and the stream, the plain is occupied by the Goklans, some 5,000 or 6,000 tents. Thence along both banks to the sea the Yamoot "choomoors," or settlers, are in possession. The Nowdeh stream draining that valley joins the Gurgan, west of the Gunbuz, much diminished by irrigation cuts by the way.

Nowdeh. stream.

Actual Persian border.

From the point where the stream leaves the hills the Persian border in the plain may be said to begin, for the Goklan and the Hajilar tribe are only nominally tributary. Thence a wide belt of forest and cane brake, with scattered villages and clearings, extends along the base of the mountains as far as Asterabad. The edge of the forest everywhere marks the border; beyond, the open plain is in undisputed possession of the Yamoots. The villages in this forest tract are large and populous. The two belooks, or districts, Finderisk and Katool, into which it is divided, having, it is estimated, together with Kohsar, 100 villages and 20,000 houses. Of late years cultivation has much extended owing to a rise in the price of wheat and the increased demand for cotton; and the forest has been cleared in parts up to the base of the hills. The present generation of Turkomans is also said to be more addicted to tilling the land than their ancestors, and more inclined to settle. The "choomoors" moving their camps but rarely and in a limited circle. These and other causes have much altered the face of the valley, and must continue to do so. Before many years are past, if even the present measure of good government and security continue, the trackless forest and collections of reed huts of a population in a chronic state of panic will have given place to a cultivated plain, combining the scenery of a well-wooded English county with the climate of southern Italy, and studded with red-roofed villages, standing out boldly amongst orchards and gardens. As it nears the sea the banks of the Gurgan fall, and its current becomes sluggish. It is said to be fordable everywhere except after floods. It reaches the sea by two mouths through a barren flat, on which are camps of the Ogurjhily, the trading tribe of Yamoots.

The Attrek tributaries. Germekhans.

The largest tributary of Attrek known as Germekhans, drains the plateaux lying north and east of Koochan, the western slopes of the Kelat chain, the Koochan plain, and the mountains bounding it on the south, an area of about 2,000 square miles forming the upper part of the drainage basin. Passing south of Koochan, it receives the waters of a large spring known as the Kara Kazan, the reputed source, also a small stream from the north of Sherwan.

Kara Kazan.

At 45 to 50 miles from Killa Yoosuf Khan, the point at which it enters the Koochan plain, it disappears in a narrow gorge known as the Tung-i-Rezabad, and continues to flow thence between high mountains W.N.W. and W. for about 40 miles to Mana, a large village, 20 miles N.W. from Bujnoord by road, receiving small streams from the Bujnoord plain, and the mountains forming the water-shed, 15 to 20 miles distant, to the south, from the north the drainage of Kooshkhana plateau, 30 to 40 miles N.E.

Mana.

From Mana, about 80 miles, to the Chat-i-Attrek, the point of junction of the Chandyr stream from the north, the Germekhans flows through a country of low hills, and plateaux seamed with ravines. The spur or ridge of the "Atak" chain bounding it to the north rises high, and is difficult to cross; that to the south is easy. Chat.

The direct road to Mana from Sherwan is said to be very bad, and probably is so, for the gorge is narrow and winding. Roads.

From the south, from Mianabad or Isferayin, two roads pass depressions in the ridge of the Koh Salig, and crossing the Bujnoord plain reach the valley of Germekhans. (Routes 14, 15.)

From Sangkhas two roads skirt the Koh Buhar, one to east, across the Shoughan plain, and west of Koh Korkhood to the Su Germekhans, and thence to Peshkala (Route 14), a good bridle road, crossing only one low ridge; the other to the west, crossing two ridges and passing Chalbash Karat to Chihl Guzar (Route 18), said to be more difficult.

From Nardin there is one road said to be passable for guns down to the "Atak," and in all respects the best.

From Chihl Guzar a road follows the stream westward to the plain, and one from Gurgan to Kara Kalla traverses the valley. This was the road most used by the Tekkah in their raids south, when they had possession of Kara Kalla.

In addition to these, the beaten tracks, there are innumerable foot paths and bridle paths traversing the valley, which is in fact accessible to the active horsemen of the country at all points. Below Mana the valley opens slightly, the hills enclosing it are bare or scantily clothed, with scrub and juniper, but the windings of the stream enclose many rich and fertile pastures, which at the "Chat" widen out into broad green prairies, unoccupied and unvisited, save by occasional passing "Allamans."

The Chandyr drains the western spurs of Koh Giffan, a high peak bearing about N.W. from Sherwan, and from Charikolang flows west. It is traversed by three roads, given in routes 14, 15, 18, and by the road leading from Gurgan to Kara Kalla. After passing for about 70 miles through a rough hilly tract, it receives from the north the Ab-i-Soont, a sub-tributary, draining the most northern spur of the Atok chain. The junction is known as the Chat-i-Chandyr. Thence bending south it joins the Attrek at the Chat-i-Attrek. Chandyr tributary.

The Ab-i-Soont drains the long high spur of the Atak chain, which forms the boundary wall of the "Atak," and runs N.W. past Kizil Arvat into the desert. To its north lies the "Dasht," a wide plateau, divided from the river by low ridges, and rising in a gradual slope up to the main ridge. N.W. and E. the enclosing mountains rise to a considerable height. At the edge of the "Dasht," on a spur of the mountain known as the Soonting Soor, or Soont Soor, stands the fort of Kara Kalla.* Its position commanding (as it does) the only good road on to the Dasht plateau Ab-i-Soont tributary. Kara Kalla.

* The latest Russian survey places the fort on the northern slope of the mountains. G. C. N.

and then to the "Atak," it has been the scene of frequent struggles between the Turkomans and Shahdilloo Koords. Some four years ago the Saham-u-dowla, Eelkhanee, or Chief of the Shahdilloo, led a small force with a few guns against it, and succeeded in capturing it after a siege of some days, and two unsuccessful assaults. The current account of the affair is probably exaggerated as to the heavy losses sustained; but there is no doubt that the Turkomans, having their wives and families with them, fought hard. They numbered 300 or 400, and but few of them escaped.

The fact that the light guns taken with the force were able to breach the walls of the fort is worthy of note, as showing that it cannot be very formidable, either in position or construction. The Persian force returned after plundering the nearest "obahs," and the fort remained unoccupied. After the fall of Khiva a body of Goklans, said to number 200 families, fugitives from thence, with the assent of the Eelkhanee, took possession of, and repaired, the fort. They did not, however, obtain undisputed possession, for the Akhal Tekkah, who had opposed their passage of the desert, attacked them frequently, and there is said to have been some hard fighting. The Goklan still remain in possession, and are nominally tributary to the Eelkhanee, and to Persia—a rumour that they have leagued with the Akhal and thus given offence to Russia, who still regards them as her subjects and only awaits an opportunity to coerce them, though possibly without foundation, invests the little garrison with an interest to which it would otherwise have no claim. From the fort to the Chat-i-Chandyr, the point at which a force attacking from that direction would enter the hills, is a distance of about eight fursakhs. The road, with the exception of the last two fursakhs, is said to be not difficult, but the spurs of the Soong Dagh, a ridge lying north of the Chat, and running S.W. close in on the stream, and must form a difficult defile. The road from Kyzil Arvat to Kara Killa (Route 14) is said to be passable for guns, but a force, if coming from the Attrek seeking to attack from that side, must march for some days across a barren waterless tract to turn the Atak range. Infantry marching from Balkhan to Kyzil Arvat would be dependent on the supply of water they would carry with them, at least between the three points where water is found.

From the Chat-i-Attrek, the point of junction of all the principal tributary streams of the Attrek, to the sea the river has a course of about 80 miles, bending towards the south, and away from the outer range. The fertile plain between it and the Gurgan lies on one side, varying in width from 12 to 7 fursakhs on the other, and stretching away far to the north, a wide expanse of barren desert.

The banks of the Attrek are said to have none of the surpassing fertility of the Gurgan plain. There are pastures and patches of cultivation, watered by canals from the Attrek, but not the spontaneous and luxuriant vegetation of the tract further south. The ruins of large cities testify, however, to the fact that the northern plain in former times supported a large population. The existing

canals from the river are shared by the Jafer Bai and Ata Bai clans of Yamoots. The former are in parts Russian subjects, the latter nominally Persian.

The Attrek flows into the Caspian at the head of a deep indentation forming a bay or estuary known as Hussun Gooli. The shores of the bay are flat, sandy, and barren. On the north shore, near the river, is the Ogurjaly Yamoot settlement of Hussun Gooli and two fursakhs further down the fort of Chekishlar, the base of operations of Markosoff's column when acting in the direction of Khiva, and at one time held permanently by the Russians but now abandoned.

Some miles above Hussun Gooli the plain becomes covered with fine pastures, which extend for two or three fursakhs up the stream. These are known as the "Attrek," and are always designated by that name and not the river, unless it be specially mentioned. Attrek.

Three days' march for troops (with camel carriage which may be reckoned at 12 or 14 fursakhs), from the sea, is the pasture of Byat-i-Haji, lately visited by a small Russian force, under General Lamakyn. The force, all infantry, moved without opposition through the Yamoot pasture, hired their camels, and obtained from them all needful assistance. The ground along the river bank and about Byat Haji was surveyed. Byat Haji.

It is rumoured that the Russians propose building a fort there, but by other accounts they were dissatisfied with the place. In the event of a forward move against Karakala and the Akhal they would certainly find it necessary to establish a post on the banks of the Attrek, to keep open communications with the sea. There is no direct route from Balkhan, the Russian head-quarters, to Byat-i-Haji; and that making a detour by the coast, the usual caravan route to Khiva is 8 long stages for camels. The base of any force that may be located there must, therefore, be on the coast near the Attrek estuary.

From 100 to 150 miles north of the estuary lies the tract of country known to the Turkomans as Balkan. It is described as an elevated steppe with rocky heights reaching to the shores of the Caspian, and long slopes to the south and east merging into the general level of the desert. There are many fine pastures and springs. The snow which covers the mountains and higher slopes in winter melting in spring leaves numerous pools, around which the Yamoot nomads from the Gurgan pitch their summer camps Balkan.

On the bay of Balkan is the Russian settlement called by them Krasnovodsk and known to the Yamoots as Kyzil Soo, and to the more distant tribes, the Akhal and Merve Tekkah, as Shah Kadam or Mullakari. Krasnovodsk.

It is the only spot yet permanently occupied by them on the south-east coast of the Caspian.

Krasnovodsk or Kyzil Soo is marked on our maps on the north shore of Balkan Bay, but the Turkomans place it on the south shore at the bottom of a little bay known as Kyzil Soo, and on the shore of a tract known as Darya (? Daryacha), three or four fur- Darya.

sakhs north of the first Russian settlement called by them Kaifa Soo. This is probably Mikhailovsk, the first settlement on the east coast made under the orders of the Governor-General of the Caucasus in 1859.

The position of Kyzil Soo is further fixed by reference to that of the island of Cheleken, which may be presumed to be correctly placed in our latest maps derived from Russian sources. The Turkomans describe Kyzil Soo as lying opposite to Cheleken and within a long gun-shot, the channel not so deep or wide as to prevent the passage of a horseman; while Krasnovodsk, as at present placed, has the whole depth and width of the Balkan Bay between it and Cheleken.

Turkoman description of new fort, Kyzil Soo.

The new fort is said to stand on the spur of a hill near the shore of the bay, naturally scarped on one side, and surrounded by a stone wall on the other.

The garrison consists of 1,000 infantry, 50 Cossacks, and a few guns. Other guns are mounted on the fort.

There is a small non-military population, camp followers from the Caucasus, Armenian shop-keepers, Yamoots in Russian pay, and traders of the Ogurjhily tribe. These last reside, to the number of 700 families, on Cheleken, but a few pitch their tents outside the fort. There is room in the fort for the whole population and force, and no other works had been commenced.

Water was at first obtained only from two or three wells, and by distilling the sea-water on board the steamers, but a good supply is now procured from new wells.

The whole Darya tract is said to be incapable of cultivation. The soil being barren and sandy, and the supply of water deficient, even for the Turkoman herds.

The one spot where there is water and soil, not loose sand nor impregnated with salt, is near Kaifa Soo, on the margin of a large fresh pool, two or three miles from the shore, which was some years ago occupied by the Russians, who have built houses and planted gardens. At Deh Sharbat, four fursakhs from Kyzil Soo, and beyond the pool, are some "obahs" of the Jaffer Bai, subject to Russia, and it was there that the Tekkah made their late raid in defiance of the Russian General.

The troops at Kyzil Soo are kept supplied from Bakoo, even live stock and bread being brought thence. There is regular steam communication.

Some distance round by sea from Kyzil Soo, at the head of the Balkan Bay, is what is described as the port, or landing-place, probably the point of debarkation of a portion of the Khivan force (the main body appear to have landed at Kinderli further up the coast). It is known as Shakadam, or Mullakari, and also by the Yamoots as Kaisa Soo. The first two names mark wells of fresh water. The place is not permanently occupied, but is looked upon as Russian.

Stumm's Reports, Khiva.

From Balkan to the nearest Tekkah "obah" is a distance of 160 to 170 miles, and except in spring there is no grass, and but

little water on the road. Thence to Byat Haji on the Attrek the distance is a little less, but the country more barren. No attempt to communicate direct was made during the late reconnoissance.

As a base of operations against the Turkomans no worse place apparently than Kyzil Soo could have been selected. Its occupation must have been persisted in for other or for ulterior objects. Krasnovodsk

The tract known as the "Atak" is the belt of fertile land extending along the base of the Alburz, from the Heri Rood to Kyzil Arvat, a distance of about 330 miles. Its width is varying and undefined; all beyond, that is to the north, is known as the "Koom" or desert. The Atak.

The whole strip of country may, for convenience, be divided into three sections, the Atak-i-Kelat, the Deregez Atak, and the Akhal Atak, a political and also a natural division, justified by some diversity of natural features.

The Kelat Atak commences near Ak Derband (at Zarabad some miles west), and stretches west about 100 miles as far as Abiverd or Bavert, the older form. It includes in its width the course of the Tejen as far west as the wooded and fertile, though uninhabited, oases known by that name. Between the habitable and culturable hill skirt and the Tejen there is, it is true, a wide stretch of desert, but they have always shared the same fortunes, both either deserted or in the hands of Persians or Turkomans. Kelat Atak.

The Kelat range reaches the Atak in long rugged spurs, pointing, for the most part, to the east, and subsiding in a maze of rough ravine cleft undulations. Many fine streams rise in its glens, and reaching the plain carry broad lines of pasture across the desert half way to the Tejen.

From the east, the first in succession of the streams is known as the Ab-i-Khour. On its banks are two or three villages known collectively as Chacha, re-occupied within the last two years, and having now a population of 100 families, taken from Kelat and Mashad. Chacha

The second, the Ab-i-Mehna, on which is a small village or "obah" of Tekkah Turkomans, who have been induced to settle there by the Khan of Kelat. Mehna was once, it is said, a city; in the time of the Sefavians a large town; later, in Nadir's time, a large camp of Tekkahs, and for 50 years a desolate ruin. The history of Abivert, Chacha, and Tejen is the same. Mehna.

The third in succession is the Kelat stream, said to be not larger than the other streams, having, 20 miles above the hill skirt, a width of 12 to 14 feet, with an average depth of 2½ feet and a swift current, a sufficient stream to irrigate a large stretch of corn-land. After flowing through the Atak for several miles it waters the village of Chardeh, also lately re-occupied by the Persians. West of the Kelat stream is the Abi Archingan, on which are three small new settlements—Igdalik and Archingan. Chardeh.

The Abiverd stream, known as the Rood-i-Kibkan, rises in the plateau N.E. of Koochan and passing through the Kibkan glen reaches the plain at Abiverd, where there are extensive ruins of the Arab period. The stream is one of the largest; it is drawn off to water some of the villages of Deregez.

The Deregez Atak extends from Abiverd, which is nominally within the limits of the state of Deregez, to Gawars, about 50 miles. It is watered by a stream rising in Koochan and flowing through Deregez. It has 20 villages along its length, some of considerable size, the total population being reckoned at 5,000. Gawars is a Tekkah "obah," the principal men of which are in the pay of the Khan.

Along the Deregez stream cultivation extends for 16 to 18 miles into the desert and grain is raised more than sufficient for local consumption.

About N.N.W. from Deregez the Atak range runs in an unbroken line of heights formed by two spurs, one ending in a peak called the Zarin Koh, overhanging the Deregez Atak and draining its south slopes into the Deregez stream; the other prolonged without any great depressions as far as Kyzil Arvat, and thence subsiding far away in the desert; its drainage reaching the Attrek by the Ab-i-Soont tributary. There are no streams, but many brooks and springs along the base of the heights, from which the fertile belt extends for 8 or 10 miles. The "obahs" of the Akhal Tekkah stretch in a line from Gawars to Kyzil Arvat, and they hold also Ishkabad and Annou, Nissa, Mehna, and Karez, fertile tracts of pasture land, enclosed by re-entering angles of the line of mountains. From Karez there is a route to Khiva, a journey of 12 days for camels along a line said to be provided with wells at each stage. The Tejen stream does not reach so far west as this, but on the third day the "Oguez," or old bed of the Oxus is crossed. The Turkoman horsemen reach Khiva in six days.

Passes.
Khushyielak Pass.

The first pass east of Astrabad is one from the Bostam plain, crossing the Alburz to Gurgan, a line little likely to be used, and presenting also great natural difficulties. It was traversed some years ago by a Persian force of 40,000 men with 30 guns. Leaving Bostam it passes over the plain N.E., crosses a high shoulder of Khushyielak Mountain, into the Nowdeh valley at Chinask, and thence up the valley to Nardin, the Kalposh plateau, and over a high ridge of the Gurgan. The total of feet of ascent by this route would be from 7,000 to 8,000; the total descent from 8,000 to 10,000. The Persian guns were of course dragged by hand all through.

Nowdeh Pass.

The road over the Khushyielak Mountain would in ordinary winters be closed for two or three months. The Nardin and Nowdeh Pass, the next in succession, though little used, is shorter, and has fewer natural difficulties than perhaps any other line that could be selected in the whole length of the Alburz. It lies in a direct line between Asterabad and Jah Jarm, in the very track of any force marching from the sea to the west. For the construc-

tion of a railway it offers facilities, only exceeded by those of the more circuitous route to the east by the Gurgan defile.

From Jah Jarm to the Sang Surakh pass (Route 17) the road is open and good, and the ascent trifling. The foot of the same pass may also be reached from Maghz in the Bostam plain by an ascent of only a few hundred feet up a long line of open easy plateaux, opening on to the Murtaza Ali Maidan.* From the foot of the pass the hill above May-o-may is distinctly visible, bearing due south.

The following gives the approximate distances and gradients to the edge of the Gurgan plain:—

Murtaza Ali Maidan to Nardin—

	Miles.	Height in feet.
Ascent - - -	2½	800
Easy, undulating - -	3½	-
Descent - - -	2	250
Level - - -	1	
Nardin to Nowdeh—		
Gentle ascent - -	4	100
Pass (ascent) - -	2	1,400
Stream (descent) - -	2	1,700
Kanchi (descent) - -	23	2,200
Nowdeh (descent) - -	19	1,600

From the Sang Surakh pass to the bottom of the Nardin pass the road is covered with snow in winter, but it is nowhere much exposed.

From Nardin northward to the Atak, the only pass said to be practicable for guns is that given in Route 18, but any line crossing the whole of the Attrek tributaries must necessarily be a difficult one. A road seeking to gain the Atak without making a detour through the Attrek plain would certainly meet with fewer difficulties by crossing the main chain east of the Attrek water-shed. Pass by Kara Killa.

Bujnoord, Nishapoor, and Mashad may be reached by the old highway of Shah Abbas, which runs up the Gurgan stream to Gurgan through the defile, Chanda Abbas, Rabat-i-Karabil, Rabat-i-Ask, and Shoughan. Thence to Bujnoord by the pass of Feroza, and to Nishapoor through the Derband-i-Hissar and the Jowin (Jouven) plain. Mashad by the same route, or through Bujnoord.

The upper part of the Gurgan valley is narrow, but the road good and gradients very easy, for the ascent in 18 to 20 miles cannot be above 2,000 to 2,500 feet.

The defile of Gurgan had once a good road through it and beyond to the open plateau, which is said to be even now, in spite of a dense growth of forest, passable for horsemen.

The plateaux undulate very easily, and have a width of several miles. The Bujnoord pass is difficult, but that of the Derband-i-Hissar exceedingly easy.

* Maidan.

The route keeps throughout so low a level that no great inconvenience could ever be experienced from snow in winter. For a railway to the east no better line could be selected.

From Koochan to the "Atak" there are two passes, one by Aughaz (Route 13) of which all available information has already been given; the other by the Dawand pass, a line nearly as good as that by Nowdeh, but attaining a greater elevation and consequently more liable to be closed in winter; that portion of it also, lying across the high plateau, is much exposed.

The following gives the approximate distances and gradients:—

Koochan to Duringar.

	Miles.	Feet.
Ascent (gentle) - -	24	
Do. (foot of pass easy) -	9½	400
Do. pass (do.) -	2	900
Deep undulations to Zobaran pass - - -	23	
Descent to Koochan - -	5	1,000

From Koochan east there are no passes that can be considered practicable for wheel carriage, or that could be rendered so with any amount of labour at short notice.

With the Nardin or Nowdeh and the Gurgan pass held, a force marching eastward from the sea would be compelled to make a march of some days northward from the Attrek through a waterless country to turn the Atak chain, and thence to march 350 miles through a country producing barely enough to support the present scanty nomadic population to Ak Derband, whence the country south and east for a great distance is uninhabited, insufficiently watered, and very rough. The detour would add most materially to the distance to be traversed, and would double difficulties of supplies and communication.

(Signed) G. C. Napier, Capt.
On Special Duty in Persia.

Note.—The information I was able to gather regarding the nature of the difficulties presented by the outer range of the Atak hills was unsatisfactory, but all accounts agreed that the road from Kara Killa to the Atak was passable for light guns, and the country to the west much broken, barren, and waterless.

Holding the Soong Dagh, a force would command its passage up the valley and Kara Killa.

(Signed) G. C. Napier.

List of Routes in the Eastern Alburz Tract, including one from Herat to Merve.

No.	Route.	Miles.	Fursakhs.
1	Herat to Merve	—	50
2	Mashad to Sarraks	—	31
3	„ Khelat-i-Nadiri and Sarraks	—	24
4	„ „ „ Atak	106	—
5	„ Deregez by Radkan	111⅓	—
6	Deregez to Sarraks	—	27⅓
7	„ Merve	—	38 to 40
8	„ Balkan	—	94 to 97
9	„ Koochan by Dawand Pass	70	—
10	Koochan to Deregez by Allaho Akbar Pass	45	—
11	„ from Ishkabad and Annan	11⅓	—
12	Ishkabad and Annau to Duringar (Route 9)	—	4⅓
13	„ „ Koochan by Aughaz	—	11⅓
14	Bujnoord to Kara Killa and Kyzil Arvat	—	38⅓
15	„ Atak	—	22
16	„ Gurgan and Asterabad	—	26⅓
17	Jah Jerm to Asterabad by Nowdeh	—	131⅓
18	Nardin to Kyzil Arvat	—	27⅓
19	„ Gurgan	—	12
20	Gurgan to Attrek (River)	—	11½
21	Asterabad to Attrek	—	10
22	Hassan Gooli to Kara Killa	—	39

Note.—Routes, of which distance is given in fursakhs, have been derived from native information usually with the aid of a rough sketch map.

Fursakhs.—Khorassan fursakh, calculated at 4¼ in plain and 4 in hills.

Distance in fursakhs in hilly country reduced one-third or one-fourth, according to ground, for direct distance. The Koords usually measure stages by the hour, calculating 1 fursakh an hour. This gives 4 to 4½ miles (for a horseman) on level ground and 2⅔ to 3 miles in the hills.

Miles.—Calculated at 4½ miles per hour on level smooth ground, the ordinary marching pace of a horse.

In rough or broken ground at 4 miles.

In mountains 2½ to 3 miles.

Ascents or gradients measured by Aneroid Barometer mean of readings of two instruments.

Elevations.—Calculated from mean of several observations of boiling point.

Temperatures from standard Thermometer.

Route No. 1.—Herat to Merve.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Khush Rabat.	6 fur.	—	- - -	Across plain north from Herat.
Kara Tuppa	12 „	18	- - -	Plain for the most part. One pass across low hills.
Archa Hauz-i-Khan.	6 „	24	- - -	Plain.
Pul-i-Khisht.	5 „	29	- - - Murghab river, not fordable.	Plain. At this stage there is a good spring, and usually camps of Sarik and Salor Turkomans from Punjdeh. It is on the banks of the Murghab, half way between Punjdeh and Merve.
Ghulkhandi	6 „	35	- - -	Plain on banks of Murghab.
Yolatan	12 „	47	- - -	Along banks of Murghab. There being grass and water on the whole line, caravans can encamp half way. Yolatan is occupied by Sarik and Salor Turkomans.
Merve	3 „	50	- - -	Plain, cultivated for the most part, and covered with camps of Tekkah. Note.—The fursakh of Khorassan, especially in plain ground, may be reckoned at 4½ miles. All the stages on the route have grass and water.

Route No. 2.—Mashad to Sarraks.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Kanna-gosha.	3½ fur.	—	- - -	Plain, E.N.E. from Mashad.
Moozderan	9½ „	13	Kashaf rood at five fursakhs fordable, water said to be brackish lower.	Plain as far as Kashaf rood. Thence over undulating ground on hill skirts along north bank. Plain to south high, undulating, fertile in parts, without any population, known as Dasht-i-Pusht-i-Koh-i-Jam, being bounded on the south by ridges lining the Jam stream. Moozderan has several watch towers, held by (nominally) 50 foot and 50 horse.
Ak Derband	9 „	22.	Defile -	Following stream through low hills. At one fursakh pass post of Gar Moozderan on south bank; at 2½ fursakhs post Tavar, north bank; 3½ fursakhs post Darz Verdi, north bank; 5½ fursakhs post Bast-i-Sang-i-Dak; at 7 fursakhs Bast-i-Ibrahim Khan; thence 2 fursakhs to Ak Derband. The defile is defended by several towers held by 50 horse and a few infantry.
Sarraks -	9 „	31	Descend pass to Shorchai, said to be passable for guns.	At 1 fursakh, descending for some distance, Shorchai, Persian post of 140 men, 4 or 5 miles below and to right of road is the junction of the Heri rood and Kashaf rood or Ab-i-Mashad, thence known as the Tejen. From Shorchai level barren plain to Surruks. Note.—This route is put down as given, but it is probable that the distance from Moozderan to Ak Darband has been exaggerated, as also the distance between the outposts on the road. In rough hilly ground the fursakh is usually estimated by the time it takes the traveller to cover his stage. Surruks has no population save a Persian garrison of 400 infantry, and 300 or 400 people, the scum of the bazaars of Mashad, sent there lately to colonise. The fort is large enough to contain all, and built, it is said, on a European plan, but it is old and dilapidated and defended only by eight light guns. The soil is fertile and water ample, wood is cut on the river banks. The garrison, however, are prisoners, being unable to move out except "in force." Supplies of grain are purchased from the Merve Turkomans.

Route No. 3.—Mashad to Kelat and Sarraks by Khour.

Kanna-gosha.	3½ fur.	—	—	
Foronad or Gujki.	2½ „	6 fur.	- - -	Large villages in the Tabatkhan Belook. Road through low hills.
Khour -	6 „	12 „	- - -	Across high ridge of the Tekkah Khana Mountain, by a road over which it is said guns have been taken. Accounts as to the road differ, but it is probably very rough and bad, and the light guns certainly taken to Tejen must have been transported by hand. Note.—From the summit of the Karadagh Mountain a good view is obtained of the whole Khour route, and a more impassable looking country for wheels it would be difficult to find. Khour is a large village lying on the north side of the ridge, at the head of the Chachha valley.
Kelat -	9 „	21 „	- - -	From Khour to Kelat is 9 fursakhs N.I and W. over a very rough country, passing the villages, Zoo and Karatagan, lately re-peopled.
Khour to Chachha.	4 „	16 fur.	- -	Down a deep valley, shut in by high spurs of the Tekkah Khana. The descent in the 16 miles is probably not less than 6,000 feet. Chachha lies within the outer range of hills, and is a large village of now 100 houses, with fine crops of rice and wheat. It was re-occupied only last year. A fine stream waters it. Tejen lies 10 fursakhs N.N.W. across a barren plain. It was till two or three years ago occupied by Turkomans from Merve.
Sarraks -	8 „	24 „	- - -	Following the stream, 2 fursakhs to Karachachha, a village in the plain, also lately occupied; and 6 fursakhs east to Sarraks, across a barren plain. Note.—Between Khour and Ak Darband there are a few paths practicable for mounted men, but very difficult. These are or ought to be held by small posts. No laden animals pass.

Route No. 4.—Mashad to Kelat and the Atak.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Kardeh	24 miles, 6¼ fur.	—	- - -	Leave Balah Kheyaban gate and turn E.N.E. through gardens. At 1½ miles pass gardens and fort of Samazgand, and bear north past dome of Khaja Ratu left. At 5 miles cross Kashaf road by stone bridge, stream small, easy banks, sound bed, and no depth water. Thence over plain rising gently to village Razan 17½ miles, on hill skirts. Thence, between long undulating gravel slopes, to Anderookh, 50 houses, 19½ miles. At 20 miles enter Derband-i-Kardeh, narrow defile, shut in by precipices, 800 to 1,000 feet in height. Mountains on either side of limestone and trap, tabular, and accessible. Stream from Kardeh finds its way through the defile, which in places has a width of less than 50 yards. At 22 miles leave stream and pass over low hills of conglomerate, skirting the stream again at 23½ miles. Thence west half mile to Kardeh, a small village of 20 or 30 houses, the property of the Khan of Choolai. Supplies procurable in abundance with notice. Road, a fair bridle path, which might be made easily practicable for guns.
			Kashaf road at 5 miles.	
			Razan, 17½ miles.	
			Anderook, 19½ miles.	
			Defile of Kardeh.	
			Ascent from Mashad about 900 feet.	
Vardeh	28 miles, 8½ fur.	52 miles, 14¾ fur.	- - -	From Kardeh follow stream up a narrow tortuous defile, winding from N.W. to N. and E.N.E., and shut in by high inaccessible cliffs, leaving a passage, frequently less than 50 yards. At 7 miles pass small village, Aoul, 20 houses. At 9½ miles, rock inscription of 926 Hijra, right bank of stream. At 19 miles small tributary from glen to left, at head of which lies large village Bolghor, one mile distant, bend north following stream, and at quarter mile pass road to village, Sceeh, falling in right rear. Defile shut in by cliffs of sandstone.
				At 24 miles emerge on open valley draining from E. and W. Two roads to Kelat branch off E. and W. The latter said to be the worst. At 26 miles cross watershed line into valley draining into the Atak, and bear left. At 27 miles cross rocky spur, by steep and bad ascent, and descend by rough path into glen of Vardeh, also draining into Atak.
				Road for 20 miles impracticable for any wheeled carriage, and commanded by inaccessible cliffs. Laden camels pass without difficulty. Last ridge above Vardeh passable by laden mules with difficulty. Camels make a long detour. Vardeh, 20 houses. Supplies very scanty.
			Ascent from Kardeh about 1,800 feet.	
Kelat-i-Nadiri.	22 miles, 6½ fur.	74 miles, 21 fur.	- - -	Leave Vardeh east down glen at 2 miles past village Baghchand, six houses, with fort on rocky hill, and turn E.N.E. over low hills of sandstone, and coloured marls and shales. At 5 miles bend north and descend deep glen with steep slopes of mottled clays and marls, and jutting spurs of slate and limestone, the strata violently contorted. At 12½ miles strike small stream flowing from west, and follow its course through a very narrow defile, shut in by cliffs, leaving a passage only sufficient for one horseman. At 16 miles enter open valley, the north side of which is bounded by the south wall of the natural fortress of Kelat. Thence following stream, bending west, down the valley. At 20 miles turn north with the stream and pass through a narrow gap in the enclosing ridge known as the Derband-i-Arghoon Shah, closed by gates. At 22 miles following stream reach village Geo Gunbuz and Nadir's tower.
				Road from 5 to 16 miles impassable for wheels or laden camels (camels using the road as far as Vardeh go no further, taking fire-wood cut in the cyprus—*juniperus excelsa*—forest to Mashad).
			Descent from Kardeh 3000 feet.	
Chardeh	28 miles.	106 miles.	- - -	From Kelat to Chardeh in the Atak is about 28 miles. To the Derband-i-Napht, in the north wall of Kelat, a narrow gap, similar to that of Arghoon Shah, is 7 miles following the stream. Road, fair bridle path, but impassable for guns. Thence, winding through a narrow valley, enclosed by low hills of clays, marls, and sandstone, 16 miles to the hill skirt. Thence to Chardeh, on the banks of the stream, at 28 miles.
				Chardeh has 50 to 60 houses, settled by Turkomans, under the protection of the Khan of Kelat.

Route No. 5.—Mashad to Deregez by Radkan.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Kazimabad	12 miles, 2½ fur.	—	- - -	Leave Mashad by the Bala Kheyaban gate, and follow the main road up the valley N.W. at 5 miles, past ruined Rabat and fort of Bahrabad. At 12 miles walled village of Kazimabad, 15 houses. Supplies plentiful. Road level and good.
Goonabad	14 miles, 3½ fur.	26 miles, 6 fur.	- - - Killa Askanya, 7 miles. Killa Eshankulla, 9 mls. Killa Sadad Khan. Killa Vakeel Khan, 11 miles.	N.W. following main road. At 7 miles Killa Askanya, right; at 9 miles Killa Eshankulla, left; Killa Sadad Khan, right. At 11 miles Killa Vakeel Khan, right. At 12½ miles country cut up by ravines, draining into the Kashaf road; roadway remains good and passable for wheels. Road heavy in parts from recent rain, but good all along. Goonabad, large village of 100 houses. Supplies ample.
Chenaran	12 miles, 3 fur.	38 miles, 9 fur.	- - - Killa Ibrahimabad, 2 miles. Killa Sologird, 3½ mls. Killa Now Buhor, 4½ miles. Shaffeabad, 7 miles. Hajiabad, 8 miles.	N.W. through gardens for 1 mile. At 2 miles Killa Ibrahimabad, right. At 3½ miles Killa Sulogird, half mile left; 4½ miles Killa Now Buhor, right. 7 miles village and gardens, Shaffeabad; 8 miles, Hajiabad. At 9½ miles cross small stream flowing north to Dastgird. At 10½ miles cross dry bed of stream from the hills south. High steep banks with ramp passable for wheels. Road sound and firm the whole way, and for the most part gravel and kunker. Country level and unbroken. Chenaran, large walled village, 400 houses. Zaffaranloo Koords.
Radkan	14 miles. 3½ fur.	52 miles. 12½ fur.	- - - Joukar, 2½ miles. Kelat Amjan, 2½ miles. Kelat-i-Arab, 8½ miles. Deh Sununder, ruined village, 5½ miles. Deh Mazanly. DehSar-i-zah. Gul Khatoon, 7 miles. Deh Mati, 8 miles.	N.N.W. across cultivated plain for 1 mile. Direct road to Koochan branches off left. Plain uncultivated and undulating to Joukar. At 8 miles clearing the last villages of Chenaran, the road passes over wide level pasture land. A marshy stream from the head of the valley is passed by a good ford. At 11½ miles the Meel-i-Radkan, a fine masonry tower, 95 feet high, with Cufic inscription is passed. Radkan is a large village of 1,000 houses of Kywanloo Koords, defended by double mud walls, towers, and ditch.
Killa Yúsuf Khan	25 miles.	77 miles.	- - - Deh Zadees, Abshor, Dacotly.	North, over level pasture land for some miles. Thence passing the villages Deh, Zades, Abshor, 2 miles further, Dacotly 4 miles further, whence 2 miles to Killa Yusuf Khan, a large village of 150 houses of Kywanloo Koords. Supplies, &c., ample.
Taveel	13½ miles.	90½ miles.	- - - Badkhor, 15 miles. Fanow, 8½ miles. Tabori, 10½ miles.	Follow stream, tributary of the Attrek, (here 10 or 12 feet by 2, but said to be not perennial) E.N.E. to the village of Badkhor, situated at the head of the valley, and at the entrance of a defile, 5 miles. At 6 miles enter defile, narrow, and completely commanded by low rocky hills, and follow windings of stream, keeping a north-easterly direction. At 8½ miles pass hamlet of Fanow, 12 houses. At 10½ miles defile opens out to half mile, with a long stretch of cultivation, in centre of which stands village of Tabori. Two small streams flow in on left, and main valley divides E. and N. From the west flows a small stream, draining the Dowlutkhana plateau. Road passing over low spur behind Tabori, follows east branch of valley due east to Taveel (13½ miles), a small Koord hamlet of 10 families. Supplies procurable. From Badkhor to Fanow and Tabori, 4 miles, the defile is narrow, and traversed by a winding stream, with two or three feet of water, and a muddy bottom for the most part, guns might pass with a little labour. Thence to Taveel the road is open and good.
Chapooshloo	21 miles, 8½ fur.	111½ miles.	- - - Maidan Khana Pass, 900 feet.	Leave valley N.E. up lateral glen, road steep and rugged, and impassable for guns. Camels are said to go, and guns have been taken round a long detour up the valley to a point where the hill is less rocky, though steeper (three or four light guns were dragged by hand). Ascending glen for 2 miles reach plateau of Maidan Khana... Thence across easy undulations

Route No. 5.—Mashad to Deregez by Rádkan—*cont.*

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
			Defile Derband-i-Kibkan.	E.N.E., and at 8 miles descend N.E. into narrow defile, following small stream. At 6 miles pass through gap in main chain known as Derband-i-Kibkan and enter open valley of Kopal.
			Derband, 7 miles.	Thence on an easterly bearing, pass at 7 miles village of Derband, the first in Deregez. At 8 miles pass fort of Kopal, with hamlet, cross stream, and follow it to 9½ miles; a total descent from Maidan Khana of 1,400 feet. Leave valley winding E.S.E. to E. towards Abiverd, and the Atak, and turn north up a narrow glen, in a high spur of the main range, running out to the S.E. At 12 miles reach summit of pass Allah-ho Akbar, a slight depression in the spur. Ascent 1,000 feet.
			Allah-ho Akbar Pass.	
			Agdash, 15 miles.	Thence descent 2,000 feet, to the village of Agdash, 15 miles over plain sloping easily to the N.E. reach Chapooshloo. Total descent from summit of pass (about) 3,000 feet. The descent of the Maidan Khana pass is steep and impracticable for guns, but the hill slopes are soft and a road might easily be cut. The ascent of 1,000 feet to the crest of Allaho Akbar is impracticable, the hill side being formed of bare limestone rock, and seamed with deep precipitous gulleys. The descent of 3,000 feet is good, the road having apparently been made, and guns might with care be driven down. The valley following the Kibkan stream to Abiverd also appears quite impracticable for guns, and is shut in by precipitous spurs on both sides.
				From the village of Derband an alternative road goes back over the shoulder of Koh Imarat, a mountain to the east, passing to the east of Taveel, reaches Radkan, in the valley. It is shorter, but avoided by caravans on account of the steep and bad ascent of the Dumji Pass.
Mohamadabad	8 mls.	—	- - -	To Mohamadabad, the chief town, or village of the Deregez state, is a distance of 8 miles, over a level plain, and through a narrow pass in a low spur running out into the plain from the mountains on the east. Thence to Khairabad and the villages in the Atak is 8 miles. A low range of hills formed of soft clays and marls being crossed by a good road. By a short detour to the west the Atak may be gained without crossing the enclosing hills through a defile by which the Deregez stream finds its way to the Atak. The defile is narrow, and might be easily defended, and the low, enclosing range, though everywhere passable for horsemen, has a steep slope to the south, and a broad crest affording good positions. From Deregez there is a road across the hills to the east, to Kelat-i-Nadiri, travelled by Colonel Baker and Lieutenant Gill, R.E., in 1873.
and the	8 „			
Atak -	—			
	16	127½ miles.		

Route No. 6.—Deregez to Sarraks.

Atak or Turan -	12 miles. 3 fur.	—	- - -	N.E. from Mohamadabad by the Derband-i-Ger Bheg or across the low hills to the south passing at 8 miles Khairabad.
Abiverd -	6 „	9 fur.	- - -	East, along hill skirt, over level ground. Abiverd is inhabited; has ample pasture; watered by a fine stream. Nearest village, Kivabat, of Kelat, lately re-peopled, some miles higher up.
Chardeh -	5 „	14 „	- - -	East along hill skirt, passing at about 10th mile Archingan, a village lately re-occupied and watered by a stream flowing from the Koh-i-Imarat, or Hazar Masjid, and passing through Kelat.
Mehna -	3½ „	17½ „	- - -	About S.E. along the Atak to Mehna, a village lately occupied from Kelat, watered by a stream from the east of Kelat.
Kara Chachha.	4 „	21½ „	- - -	S.E. See route No. 3.
Surruks -	6 „	27½ „	- - -	

Route No. 7.—Deregez to Merve.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Tejen -	10 fur.	—	- - -	From Deregez to Merve is a journey of six days for laden camels, about 150 to 160 miles. At 35 to 40 miles the Tejen is crossed, a shallow stream, flowing through a sandy waste, and fringed by thin scrub of tamarisk and willow. Thence four long stages across a desert, with wells of brackish water at each halting-place. Laden mules also accomplish the journey.
Merve -	28 to 30	38 to 40		

Route No. 8.—Deregez to Annau, Kyzil Arvat, Balkhan.

Nowkhandan.	8 mls. 2 fur.	—	- - -	N.W. across the cultivated plain of Deregez, following the course of the stream draining the valley. Nowkhandan is a large village of 700 houses, surrounding a high mound, on which stands the fort. Gardens and vineyards extend for some miles up and down the stream.
Annau and Ishkabad.	8 „	10 fur.	- - -	Leave the valley of Deregez by the Dihana or pass of Ishkabad (N.W.), which is easy and practicable for light guns, and cross over low hills to the Atak; passing at the edge of the plain Gawars, the first Tekkah "obah."
			Gawars.	
			Annaw.	At 8 fursakhs reach Annau, 300 tents, and 2 miles further, Ishkabad, 1,000 tents.
Kurjow -	10 to 11	18 to 19	- - -	Along the Atak skirting the hills.
Akhal -	10 to 11	28 to 29	- - -	Ditto.
Karez -	8 to 7	36 to 37	- - -	Ditto.
Doran -	10 fur.	46 to 47	- - -	Ditto.
Bami Burma.	9 „	55 to 56	- - -	Two large "obahs," about 1 mile apart, destroyed by the Russians under Markosoff in 1873.
Kyzil Arvat	7 „	64 to 65	- - -	The country passed over, as far as Kyzil Arvat, is level, barren for the most part, but not a sandy waste, as is the desert, or "koom" beyond. No less than 40 Tekkah "obahs," each with its small stream from the mountains or perennial spring, are passed; and there is extensive cultivation. The population of from 20,000 to 30,000 families, subsisting without the necessity of purchasing.
Balkhan, 3 days.	32 to 33	94 to 97	- - -	From Kyzil Arvat to Balkhan is a ride of 3 days, making stages of 10 fursakhs,* 40 to 43 miles a day. The country is broken by sand hills and low rocky ridges, the last spurs of the Alburz, which extends in that direction across the desert as far nearly as Balkhan. The tract is said to be elevated above the desert N. and S. of it, and to have a few springs and pools of fresh water, and in spring abundant pasturage in some places, frequented by the Yamoots "Charwars," or nomads. Caravans have never passed that way, but the Tekkah have twice lately ridden across to attack the Russians on the "Darja," or "Daryacha," the lake of Kaifa Soo, described as a small lake of fresh water collected from the rainfall on the surrounding tracts, on the edge of which gardens and houses have been commenced.
				Thence to Kyzil Soo, the permanent settlement or fort of Krasnovodsk, and to Kaifa Soo and Shah Kadam, the landing place at the head of the bay, is a distance of 2 to 3 fursakhs.
				*Note.—Distance is given as stated to me, but each day's journey was probably much longer. For assuming that Astrabad and the mouth of the Balkhan inlet have been laid down from correct Russian sources, and the position of Kyzil Arvat from Bujnoord correctly given to me, as I believe it to have been, the distance from Kyzil Soo to Kyzil Arvat should be about 170 miles.

Route No. 9.—Deregez to Koochan by Dawand Pass.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Nowkhandan.	8 mls.	—	- - -	Route No. 8.
Duringar -	2½ fur.			
	24mls.	32mls.	- - -	N.W. from Nowkhandan through gardens and vineyards. At 1½ miles pass Khallaloo, and gain wide open cultivated plain. 5½ miles Koh Kohchar, a spur of the main range runs out into the plains, rising to a height of about 1,200 feet. Thence bear west skirting right flank of mountain, and follow stream up the valley, which contracts to 1 mile in width, ½ mile from Zanadilloo valley bends W.N.W. Sang Surkh lies on the slope of a spur on right bank, and closes a pass leading from the Akhal settlements in the Atak; the road lying N.W. up a glen, and over Koh Asalma to Annau and Ishkabad, distant 16 miles (4 fursakhs).
	6¾ fur.	9¼ fur.	Burjkilla, 2½ miles, 20 houses.	
			Zulfan, 3½ miles, 30 houses; Khalkanloo Tozanloo, 20 houses ½ mile left.	
			5½ Faiz Ali Beg, 20 houses.	
			Shekanloo, 20 houses, 10 miles.	
			Zainadilloo, 15 houses, 12½ miles.	
			Sang Surukh, 16½ miles.	
			Duringar Toorki, 18½ miles, 15 houses.	At Sang Surakh, pass through narrow gap in mountains W.S.W. and turn N.W. At 23 miles, valley bends sharp S.S.W. At 24 miles gardens and hamlet of Duringar-i-Koordi, four hamlets of 20 to 25 houses in each, of Kaikanloo Koords. Supplies ample. A road to Kalta Chenar and Annau leads off N.W. from village up narrow glen.
Imamgulli	20 miles 6 fur.	52 miles 15¼ fur.	- - -	Follow glen S.S.W. At 4 miles cross stream, and leave it, issuing from narrow gorge on right, through which lies road to Shorak Durhadam, villages of Koochan, distant five fursakhs. Thence on south bearing up narrow, rocky glen. At 9½ miles reach foot of Dawand Pass.
			Dawand Pass, 900 feet.	Road passable for wheels, but narrow, and commanded by rocky heights. Ascent of Dawand Pass, 2 miles, 900 feet; road fairly good, and ascent for most part easy.
				From crest of pass, south, over bare open downs, leading over low gap in Chooeenlee ridge. At 13½ miles, pass Chooeenlee, 20 families, Marjanloo Koords, and cross low, easy ridge, into wide, undulating valley of Zooblilig, draining north into the Duringar stream. Thence north over steep undulations to stream and village of Imamgulli, 60 families, Zaffranloo. Supplies procurable.
				Note.—The Dawand Pass is exceedingly easy, and might with little difficulty be made passable for guns.
Koochan -	18 miles.	70 miles.	- - -	S.S.E. At 1 mile cross a low ridge on right, and on south by good road over the Katirchi plateau. At 5½ miles cross low ridge of Alumli by good road, and enter plateau of Dowlatkhana; crossing which, at 13 miles, reach the Zobaran Pass, thence to Koochan, 5 miles, over low hills. Light guns have been taken to the Atak by this road, and it might with little labour be made passable for any wheeled carriage.

Route No. 10.—Koochan to Deregez by Allaho Akbar Pass.

Killa Yoosuf Khan.	10½ miles.	—	- - -	Leave Koochan by east gate and follow Mashad road At 1 mile cross stream (shallow, with sound bed, 16 to 18 feet by 2 feet depth) and pass through village. Teelab, and on east following hill skirt. At 3½ miles Killa Karbalai Aghassi, with square mud fort on mound, 1 mile right. A road turns off left through hills to Dowlatkhana. Turn E.S.E. across plain, and at 7½ miles pass village Hy Hy. Thence bend towards gap in hills bearing due east and follow course of stream, passing village and ruined fort of Chalaki. At 10½ miles reach Killa Yoosuf Khan, on the borders of Koochan and Radkan.
			Teelab, 1 mile.	
			Karbalai Aghassi, 3½ miles.	
			Hy Hy, 7½ miles.	
			Chalaki, 10½ miles.	
		108½ miles.	- - -	Thence to Deregez by route No. 5, 34½ miles.

ROUTE No. 11.—KOOCHAN FROM ISHKABAD AND ANNAU.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
		—		From Ishkabad, 1½ fursakhs over plain, and enter glen Koh Asalma on left, Koh Dashtai right. At 2¼ fursakh (9 miles) pass Awardan, ruined fort, with spring known as Boozbalk. On, for a short fursakh (3 miles), to pass of Balikhar, a long easy ascent. At 14 miles, 3½ fur. after a long, gradual, descent, reach Durbadam (300 houses) Koords. Thence, to 17 miles (4¼ fur.) up glen, by good road, to Shorak, 100 houses. At 18 miles, 4½ fursakhs, a long, easy, ascent, on to plateau of Imamgooli. Thence, a short fursakh, 3 miles, to village Imamgooli, and to Koochan, as by route No. 9. Road said to be as good as that by Dawand Pass.
			Awardan, 2¼ fur.	
			Boozbalk.	
			Durbadam, 3½ fur.	
Imamgooli	4½ fur. 28mls.	—	Shorak, 4½ fur.	
Koochan -	18 „	11½	- - -	

ROUTE No. 12.—ISHKABAD AND ANNAU TO DURINGAR IN ROUTE No. 9.

			Sang Surakh	From Ishkabad (5 miles), 1½ fursakhs (short), across plain, enter valley, and follow it over level ground to 11 miles, wide, open, pasture of Nissa. Thence a road branches off to Sang Surakh (Route No. 9) by which light guns belonging to the Hissam-u-Sultana's force reached Ishkabad.
Kalta Chenar.	3½ fur.	—	- - -	From Nissa pasture follow, narrow easy glen, 1 fursakh to Kalta Cheenar, a large village of 100 houses of "Sunnis;" a remnant of the populations of the old towns of the Atak, Mehna, Annau, Ishkabad, still known as Mehnais, Annauis, &c. Thence to Duringar descent of 4 miles, 1 long fursakh, over a good road, down a narrow glen.
				The pass from the Atak, over low part of the Asalma ridge, is described as easy and practicable for light guns dragged by hand.

ROUTE No. 13.—KOOCHAN FROM ISHKABAD AND ANNAU BY AUGHAZ.

Awardan -	2¼ fur.	—	- - -	To Awardan as in Route No. 11. Thence two miles over level pasture passing the Kerawul Khana-i-Zilan, and, to 3½ fursakhs, up the Kotul-i-Zilan, a long, easy, slope. Thence, by easy descent for 2 fursakhs, to Aughaz, 100 houses (Koochan). Thence ½ long fursakh to Chappa and Shukarli hamlets in a glen running south, up to a high ridge. Thence over downs ½ fursakh to Killa Sapoor, and ascend an easy ridge. Thence ½ fursakh to Koorun, 40 houses, and descending narrow, easy, glen, enter plain of Koochan, at 8 fursakhs. Thence ½ fursakh to Derhand-i-Hissar, ½ fursakh to Khabooshan, old fort of Koochan, and 2½ fursakhs to Koochan.
Aughaz -	3¼ „	5¼ fur.	- - -	
Koochan -	6 „	11¼ „	- - -	Route said to be very easy. It is the one usually followed by the Koords of Koochan in their raids against the Akhal.

ROUTE No. 14.—BUJNOORD TO KARA KALLA, KYZIL ARVAT.

Mana -	6 fur.	—	- - -	N.W. over spur of Koh Akhir, north of Bujnoord, to the banks of the Germekhan tributary, over a difficult hill path, practicable for laden mules only.
			Germekhan stream, 6 fur.	Mana is a large village of 400 to 500 horses, including the neighbouring hamlets.
Peshkalla -	3 „	9 „	- - -	Following down the course of the Germekhans, which flows through low undulating hills.
Karai -	7 „	16 „	- - -	From Peshkalla, north, leaving the Germekhans valley, to Kalta Cheenar, site of a large village now deserted. Thence west to Karai, also a ruined village. Road said to be easy.
				NOTE.—From Karai two roads pass over the spur enclosing the Germekhans tributary to the north, both described as very difficult, though the one to the west was passed by the guns taken with the force under the Saham-u-dowla to Kara Kalla.

Route No. 14.—Bujnoord to Kara Kalla, Kyzil Arvat—*cont.*

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Chaudyr stream.	6½ fur.	22½ fur.	- - -	The western road ascends the spur at a point known as Geuk Kamar, and crossing it, descends in a north-westerly direction into the valley of the Chaudyr tributary. Thence passes north over low hills presenting no difficulties, crossing the Ab-i-Sunt tributary of the Attrek, and skirts the west spurs of the Sunt Soor mountain to Karakalla.
Karakalla -	6 „	28½ „	Ab-i-Sunt or Soont stream. - - -	The eastern road passes north from Karni, is slightly shorter, and more difficult, but is passable for horsemen. It crosses the Chaudyr tributary at a point 4 fursakhs above the western road, where are the ruins of a fort known as the Kalla Dodook, and thence runs N.W. to the Ab-i-Sunt, and over the Sunt Soor mountain to Karakalla, 11 fursakhs.
Kyzil Arvat	10 „	28½ „	- -	Thence to Kyzil Arvat is a distance of 10 fursakhs, 7 to the Atak, by a difficult road skirting the Dasht, a high plateau extending along the south slope of the outer or Atak range for some distance and reaching down to the banks of the Ab-i-Soont, and passing at 2 fursakhs some ruins known as Khaja Mohalla. The descent to the Atak is said to be easy and practicable for light guns. From the foot of the hills to Kyzil Arvat is 3 fursakhs N.W. across the plain. From Khaja Mohalla, or Mohallasa, a road passes N.E. to Bami Burma, 7 fursakhs distant, in the Atak.

Route No. 15.—Bujnoord to Doran, Kara Kalla, and Kelat-i-Nur Verdi Khan in "Atak."

			Gemekhan stream, 2 fursakhs. Moujah Pass.	From Bujnoord due north to the Germekhan tributary, 2 fursakhs. Thence a foot path strikes off due north over the higher spurs of the Attrek water-shed, and gaining the Atak by the Dihana or pass of Moujah, 1 fursakh beyond which lies the Kelat of Nur Verdi, the leading Aksakal of the Tekkah of Akhal. The bridle road follows the stream S.W. for 3 fursakhs, and then strikes off north over a low portion of the spur into the plain or plateau of Harar; traversing which and crossing a high spur into the Ab-i-Soont Valley, it passes at 16 fursakhs the ruins of Dadyana. Thence a road goes north to the Dihana or Pass of Abzar, 5 fursakhs, and 1 fursakh across the plain to Doran and Karakhan (or Karghan). Another turns towards the east to the Dihana Moujah, 8 fursakhs, and thence to Kelat-i-Nur Verdi Khan. Both roads are said to be passable for laden mules.
Dadyana -	16 fur.	—	Ab-i-Soont. - - - - Abzar Pass, 21 fur.	
Doran -	6 „	22 fur.	- - -	

Route No. 16.—Bujnoord to Gurgan and Astrabad.

Simulghan	7½ fur.	—	- - -	From Bujnoord, west, across a spur of Akhir Koh, over a good road, to Simulghan, a collection of 8 or 10 villages, with 400 to 500 houses, lying in a fine plateau, which stretches west for 8 or 10 fursakhs.
Rabat-i-Karaguez.	8 „	15½ fr.	- - -	W. and S., 32 miles, to Rabat-i-Karaguez or Karabil, an old caravanserai of the time of Shah Abbas, on a plateau draining to the Gurgan.
Chanda Abbas.	4 „	19½ „	- - -	About west to Chanda Abbass and Arghoot, depopulated places on the same plateau, near its western edge. On the hills to the north lie Karagifan and Shah-Abad (which appears as Shahbaz on many maps).
Gurgan -	7	26½ „	- - -	West, at 2 fursakhs reaching the defile known as the Dihana-i-Gurgan. This defile is described as narrow and shut in by precipitous hills; and from a distance it has this appearance, but the road is good, and might be made passable for guns. A wide road, cut by Shah Abbass, is now buried in dense forest. From the defile to Gurgan in the plain is 5 fursakhs, following the stream, which rises below the defile. At Gurgan are camps of Goklan.

Route No. 16.—Bujnoord to Gurgan and Astrabad—*cont.*

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Goombuz-i-Kaoos.	8 fur.	34½ fr.	- - -	Thence, following along the high banks of the Gurgan, west to the Goombuz-i-Kaoos, a tower in the plain, where are ruins of a city and camps of Goklan.
Finderesk -	6 „	40½ „	- - -	Across Gurgan plain, west, to Finderesk, a large village on the skirts of the belt of forest, and in the district of Astrabad.
Astrabad -	9 „	49½ „	- - -	Thence to Astrabad, 36 miles, 9 fursakhs.

Route No. 17.—Jah Jarm to Astrabad by Nowdeh.

Jah Jerm -	30 ms.	—	- - -	N.W. across plain and hill skirt broken by ravines.
			Iwar, 7 miles, 50 houses.	Road fairly good. At 7 miles Iwar, village of Jah Jerm, 50 houses. Thence west through broken, hilly country, cultivated. At 9½ miles pass village Durra.
			Durra, 9½ miles.	Thence through uncultivated, open glen, enclosed by low easy hills. At 13 miles glen branches. Left branch bearing S.W. leading into the Bostam plain at village of Magas. Follow right branch W.N.W., narrow and winding, hill slopes easy. At 16 miles bear west, and at 18 miles reach open plateau, draining from N. and S., opening S. on the Bostam plain,
			Murtaza Ali Maidan, 18 miles.	distant 3 fursakhs, and known as Murtaza Ali Maidan. Cross plateau west, and at 21 miles enter glen. Two miles to the right a mule path leads over the hills to Kalposh and Gurgan in the Gurgan plain. At 23 miles pass through narrow defile between masses of trap rock known as Sang Surakh, and by easy ascent reach a plateau, broken by low hills. On north and at 27 miles bend west to Nardin, and descend into basin 6 or 8 miles, by 3 or 4, surrounded by high mountains, towards the west end of which lies the fort of Nardin, a small mud walled enclosure with high thin walls and circular bastions, defended by three light field guns. Supplies scanty.
				Road good. Except for half mile at the Sang Surakh Pass, guns might be driven to Nardin, and at that point a little labour would render the path practicable. No water save a brackish spring at Sung Surakh, after leaving the village of Durra.
Kanchi -	23 ms.	53 ms.	- - -	Leaving Nardin fort cross open plain west for half mile, thence W.N.W. to foot of hills at 6 miles. Thence up rugged hill of limestone and trap over fair bridle road, with easy ascent to crest of ridge at 7
			Nardin Pass, ascent 1,500 feet, descent easy.	miles. Ascent 1,500 feet. Thence easy descent into glen leading down to valley of Nowdeh, tributary of the Gurgan. At 8 miles reach stream, village Toolbin,
			Toolbin, 50 houses, Nowdeh stream.	one mile right up stream. The ascent and descent of this pass are both easy. 30 guns were taken over it by the Sipah Salar some years ago; they were dragged, but with a little labour might have been driven. The hill side is of friable traps, and trap tuffs, soft clays and marls.
				Follow Nowdeh stream S.W., the road good, and keeping above and to the right side of stream. Hill side soft. Guns might follow bed of stream, or road, if
			Gulistan, 11 miles.	widened in parts. At 11 miles pass village Gulistan,
			Chinask, 200 houses.	30 houses. At 13 miles pass village Chinask, 200 houses (with hamlets), on hill side above stream, left. Through Chinask lies a road over a high shoulder of Khushyeilak Mountain to Bostam, by which guns have been brought to Nardin. At 21 miles valley opens out and bends west. A stretch of well cultivated ground, half mile in width, extends thence to
			Descent to Poursian, 2,800 feet.	23 miles, where on a sub-tributary from N.E. is Kanchi Poursian, one of three hamlets known collectively as Poursian, consisting of 50 houses. Supplies ample.
Nowdeh -	19 ms.	72 ms.	- - -	Cross Kanchi glen and spur of opposite hill, and at 1 mile strike Nowdeh stream, and bear west Khushyulak Peak bearing S.S.W. Valley open and cultivated. Road narrow and stony along right banks. At 11 miles across small stream of Alaroo from village Abre, at head of a glen in mountains to left. Thence valley narrows and bends, north banks of stream high, and covered with heavy forest of oak, elm, alder, and other

Route No. 17.—Jah Jarm to Astrabad by Nowdeh—*cont.*

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
			Nowdeh, 1,600 feet.	deciduous trees. Forest-clad slopes of mountains on either hand, reach banks of stream. At 17 miles valley again opens out to 1½ to 2 miles in width, and is cleared and cultivated. Keeping left side of valley, at 19 miles, reach village Nowdeh, 50 houses. Supplies ample. Between Nowdeh and the Gurgan plain a few isolated hills, and four or five miles of dense forest, and cane brake intervene. The forest is traversed only by narrow winding paths. Between Kanchi and Nowdeh some labour would have to be expended in clearing a road through the 6 miles of forest that must be traversed, but the route presents no other difficulties.
Ramyan	12½ miles.	84½ miles.	- - -	W.S.W. from Nowdeh through dense thickets of undergrowth and scrub, covering deserted clearings. Path narrow and winding. At 2 miles enter heavy forest, free of undergrowth. At 9 miles reach foot of wooded spur, ascent and descent of half mile, very steep. Thence through open forest west into the glen of Ramyan, a large village of 200 houses, in a gorge opening on the Gurgan plain, but separated from it by some miles of forest and cane-brake.
Katool	22 miles.	106½ miles.	- - -	West from Ramyan through scattered patches of forest and dense cane-brakes. At 11½ miles reach Finderesk, chief village of the district, of 1,000 houses with surrounding hamlets, lying near the edge of the sub-montane belt of forest. From Finderesk to Nowdeh there is a direct road, shorter and easier, but crossing for some distance the open plain. The Ramyan route is only selected for safety. From Finderesk bear W.S.W., and at 14 miles pass Maintaloo in the forest on the edge of the plain. At 15½ miles cross small stream Odarooah from hills left. Dar Killa, 200 houses, half mile left. Country open and cultivated to base of hills 7 to 8 miles distant. At 16 miles enter forest, and bear N.W. At 18 miles cross wide gravelly bed of stream, from Abre, impassable at times in early summer. Thence through forest clearings, 22 miles to Katool, large village of 400 houses. Supplies procurable.
Astrabad	25 miles.	131⅓ miles.	- - -	Bear west across cultivated plain and scattered forest to Peechuk Mohalla, 3 miles. At 12 miles enter heavy forest, and at 14 pass ruined village, Ganara, in forest. At 16 miles still west reach Nowdeh, village of 200 houses. Thence west through scattered cultivation, forest, and plain covered with dense scrub of thorns, 13 miles, to Astrabad. Track for the most part good, but narrow and heavy from recent rain. NOTE.—By striking across the plain from Astrabad, Nowdeh might be reached in two long marches, for the most part over open ground.

ROUTE No. 18.—NARDIN TO KYZIL ARVAT.

Kalposh	3½ fur.	—	- - -	From Nardin N.E. into the Kalposh plateau.
Chanda Abbas.	8 „	11½ fr.	- - -	Thence E.N.E. to Kalyoon Durra, and descend north into the plain of Dasht, traversing which, at 8 fur., Chanda Abbass is reached. Road good and passable for guns.
Karat	10 „	21½ „	- - -	From Chanda Abbass across plain for 3 or 4 miles, passing Yaghi Oghan on hill skirts (depopulated), and thence over high spurs of Korkhood Mountain to Karat, at west end of plateau of Simalghan.
Karai	6 „	27½ „	- - -	Descend north into valley of the Germekhans tributary, and cross stream at Chihl Guzr, thence 4 fursakhs to Karai. Road passable for light guns. From Karai as in Route No. 14.

Route No. 19.—Nardin to Gurgan.

Stages.	Distance. Miles, &c.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, and Villages.	General Description.
Kalposh -	3½ fr.	—	- - -	N.E. from Nardin.
Gurgan -	8½ „	12 fur.	- - -	N. and W. from Kalposh over the outer range of mountains into the Gurgan plain, and across the plain for 8 or 9 miles. The 30 guns taken by the Sepah Salar to Gurgan were dragged by hand on their carriages, over the range of mountains dividing Kalposh from the plain.

Route No. 20.—Gurgan to Attrek (River).

Khalid-i-Paighambar.	8 fur.	—	- - -	From Gurgan west, following stream for a few miles, thence north, across an undulating plain, and over a low ridge dividing the two rivers, to Khalid Paighambar, an Imamzada, on an isolated hill.
Chat-i-Attrek.	3½ „	11½ fr.	- - -	Thence across the plain to the junction of the Ab-i-Soont and Chaudyr, tributaries of the Attrek, known as the Chat-i-Attrek.
				The whole line is described as broken and difficult ground, much cut up by ravines.

Route No. 21.—Astrabad to Attrek.

Gurgan River.	3 fur.	—	- - -	From Astrabad to Akkalla N.E. for 2 fursakhs, crossing at 1½ fursakhs the Kara Soo stream, thence 1 fursakh to the Gurgan.
Attrek -	7 „	10 fur.	- - -	From the Gurgan about north to the Attrek, across which lie the Attrek, pastures extending from Hassan Gooli on the estuary of the Attrek, for 2 or 3 fursakhs up stream.

Route No. 22.—Hassan Gooli to Kara Kalla.

Byat-i-Haji	12 fur.	—	- - -	From Hassan Gooli, a settlement of Ogurjaly Turkomans, on the north shore of the Attrek estuary, to the Attrek pastures, 2 fursakhs. Thence along bank of river to Byat-i-Haji olang (pasture), 12 fursakhs.
Chat or Chat-i-Attrek.	10 „	22 fur.	- - -	Along bank of river to junction of the Germekhaus, the main tributary with those from the north.
Chat-i-Chaudyr.	7 „	29 „	- - -	Along the banks of the Chaudyr, or north tributary, to the junction of the two main branches from the Atak range, Ab-i-Soont, and the Chaudyr, rising in a plateau known as Charik-Olang.
Kara Kalla	10 „	39 „	- - - Soongdagh.	North of the Chat-i-Chaudyr is the Soongdagh, a range of hills said to have many springs and fine pastures. Its spurs reach to the banks of the river. Thence following the Ab-i-Soont tributary, flowing through open plateau, for 8 fursakhs, turn off north to Kara Kalla, up a steep ascent over spurs of the Soont Soor mountain.

No. 24, dated Gulahek, 29th June 1875.

From HON. CAPTAIN G. C. NAPIER, on special duty in Persia, to C. U. AITCHISON, ESQ., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith a supplementary collection of itineraries and routes in the Eastern Alburz Tract. The numbers in the list of routes are consecutive with those in the list attached to my memorandum on the Topography of the Eastern Alburz submitted in February last.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF ROUTES IN THE EASTERN ALBURZ TRACT.

No.	Route.	Total of Miles.	Total of Fursakhs.
23	Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh - -	237	—
24	Astrabad to Teheran by Sari, Amool, and Ask - -	237¼	—
25	„ Shahrood by Gez and the Chalchalyan Pass	97½	—
26	Shahrood to Astrabad by Kuzlook - - -	—	16
27	Astrabad to Shahrood by Nikah - - - -	156	—
28	Chashm a-i-Ali to Mazanderan by Shamsherbur Pass -	71	—
29	Mazinan to Jagatai in Jouven valley and thence to Nishapoor.	175½	—
30	Mashad to Koochan and Bujnoord - - -	164¼	—
31	Bujnoord to Jah Jerm - - - - -	71½	—
32	Jah Jarm to Shahrood - - - - -	—	18
33	Chinnaran (Mashad) to Isferayin and Jouven - -	108	27

ROUTE NO. 23.—TEHERAN (GULAHEK) TO SHAHROOD BY FIROZKOH.

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
1	Kamr -	23½	- -	- - -	Pass through village Rustamabad crossing that stream at bridge, and thence east through Arash and Ooshgool.
					Leaving last village follow track leading E.S.E., and bending south to gap in range of low hills bounding plain on right hand.
				Narmak, 9 miles.	Pass through narrow gorge and emerge on plain of Dar Dasht, opening on Teheran, at hamlet Narmak.
				Surkhhisar, 16 miles.	Thence due east, 7 miles across undulating gravelly plain to Surkhhisar, hamlet with water, passing at 1½ miles gardens and enclosure of Majidabad, and crossing at 5 miles road from Teheran to Aftcha Pass, Lar, and Sari. At Surkhhisar strike into road from Teheran (distant 12 miles).
				Teheran road.	
					Beyond hamlet direct road to Jajarood ford leads due east up small stream 3 miles to river, road to bridge turns N.E. over low range. At 4½ miles reach crest, 750 feet, easy ascent, low heights of gravel and alluvium on either hand, descent to bridge, steep 2 miles, 800 feet.
				Jajarood stream, 22½ miles.	Stream running through narrow valley with strips of cultivation of few yards square, fordable, bridge of four arches and causeway in good repair, left bank easy, hill slightly receding, right, hills commanding, turn up stream few hundred yards, then follow lateral glen with small stream due east for 1 mile to hamlet Kamr.

Route No. 23.—Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
2	Giliard -	23½	47	- - -	From Kamr proceed up stream and due east, at half a mile hills recede falling away right (south), at 4 miles gain crest of ridge, gentle ascent over long undulations, road open, soil alluvium and gravel, rough grass abundant, descend slightly, and pass on east for 6 miles over undulating broken plateau, right, main ridge, left, low hills skirting plateau, below which runs stream from Damawand valley, beyond, barren range Karagatch hills, behind which lies the caravan road; road good, soil alluvium with gravel.
				Boomhind, 12 miles.	At 5½ miles pass small mud serai of Awanjelah left, gardens and few fields off right; at 8 miles deep ravine with small stream, snow water, and few acres barley and wheat; at 11½ miles descend for half a mile to hamlet and stream of Boomhind, villages up and down valley, good strip of cultivation skirting stream, which is never dry in ordinary years. Thence crossing stream by bridge, 5 arches, traverse broken plateau, road good with a few steep pitches, soil alluvium mixed with sand and coarse gravel, dark sandstone rock showing in places. At 16½ miles easy descent to hamlet and stream Roodhind, stream perennial, good strip of cultivation, large village, Sinhband down stream. Thence 3 miles over open plateau, road good, and 3 miles over steep undulations of projecting spur of main range, road good with a few steep pitches; at 20½ miles reach crest of plateau. Thence easy descent of 3 miles (700 feet) to hamlet Giliard in wide open valley of Damawand, wide stretch of cultivation.
3	Saidabad -	21	68	- - -	From Giliard easy descent S.E. by S., half a mile, to stream of Damawand crossed by good bridge, stream perennial; at 1 mile bend E.S.E., a road leading off right to village Ab-i-Sard. At 4 miles reach crest of ascent from valley, road very good over level alluvial plain, sloping slightly south. At 4½ miles path leading off to Ab-i-Sard and Mazinek, large villages on south side of plateau, 5 miles off right front. Thence 6 miles across plateau gradually approaching main range on north to large village Aina Verzan, 10 miles, last 2 miles rough and stony. Aina Verzan, 100 houses, large breadth of cultivation, supplies, grain, and water plentiful.
				Aina Verzan, 10 miles.	
				Jaghoon, 13 miles.	Thence to large village Jaghoon at 13 miles; supplies and water plentiful; road rough and stony along slope of mountains. Thence to Sarbandan and Bagh-i-Shah, at 17 miles over similar road, cultivation stretching 6 or 8 miles across plateau, which here contracts. Thence still along rough hill skirt to Saidabad at 21 miles, small village with supplies of grain in good seasons. Plateau contracted to 5 or 6 miles ends here, and falls away abruptly into deep valley leading south through the Karagatch hills to the plain.
4	Firozkoh -	30½	98½	- - -	From Saidabad cross ravine and descend (passing at 12½ miles small serai and at 1 mile hamlet) lateral ravine with easy gradient to 3½ miles; rise about 400 feet. Thence for short distance along narrow plateau 1 mile in width, road fair, passable for guns, and with little labour for carts.
				Delichai ford, 9½ miles, perennial.	At 5 miles descend through rocky glen to Delichai stream; at 9½ miles, descent 700 feet, road bad, but might be easily widened for wheels, hill slopes being formed of loose shale and clay, commanded both hands, but crests accessible and open; shallow stream of good water 15 feet wide. From stream short ascent overhanging river might be easily made practicable by widening one or two angles; surface good.
					Thence above the Delichai over two steep ascents and two descents that might give trouble, and, leaving stream flowing S.E., ascend lateral ravine to plateau, 5 or 6 miles wide, and village

Route No. 23.—Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
				Aminabad, 14½ miles.	Aminabad at 14½ miles. Thence 3 miles along good road bending from E. to N.E., skirting mountains on right to 17½ miles; total rise 950 feet.
				Namrood stream, 23 miles.	Thence descend N.E. for 6 miles to Namrood stream, fall 1,100 feet; road steep, surface and width good, slope of mountain easy, stream flowing swiftly over wide pebbly bed S.E., width 80 yards, greatest depth 4 feet at this season (July), in flood impassable, small pebbles forming bed being scoured into deep holes, perennial, banks at crossing point quite open.
				Sawashi stream.	Thence ascend lateral valley with a little cultivation, and traverse open plateau, 15 to 20 miles in width, for 7 miles to village Firozkoh, situated on the Sawashi stream, which flows from the north in a wide swampy hollow, and reaching the mountains bounding south of plateau, turns east and passes through narrow gorge and through village, where it is crossed by small bridge; stream perennial, 15 feet wide, and shallow. Firozkoh, large village, supplies and forage plentiful, firewood might be procured, surrounding hills being sparsely covered with juniper.
5	Gor-i-Sofid	18	116½	- - -	Leaving Firozkoh follow Gor-i-Sofid stream, E.N.E., road for 1 mile along hill skirt, narrow and bad but level, cultivated ground on left, plateau named Julga-i-Kotalan stretching away 8 to 10 miles left and left front. At 3 miles bearing east and still following stream enter cultivated valley, 1½ miles wide, road good, would be heavy in wet weather. At 4 miles village Siah Dih on hills left, above village passes road from Semnan to Mazandaran joining post road; at 5½ miles village Kamand on hill left, valley cultivated 1-12th mile wide, very fertile, and covered with grass where not bearing crops; at 6½ miles turn sharp south and follow stream through narrow gorge of 80 to 100 yards shut in by cliffs of limestone, red sandstone, and conglomerate of boulders, gravel, and sand, 200 to 300 feet high, known as the Tang-i-Mir Shikar, length of gorge 150 to 200 yards. Thence enter plateau of 2 or 3 square miles with cultivation of village Mitim shut out from view by spur to south, cross plateau easterly and follow stream for 11½ miles through level fertile valley, well cultivated and of varying breadth, camp at 18 miles, no village or supplies, water plentiful, camping ground open, width half to 1 mile, hills easy, grass abundant.
				Tang-i-Mir Shikar Defile, 6½ miles.	
				Gor Sofid, 18 miles.	
					NOTE.—At 7th mile road to Semnan, 8 fursakhs south, crossed; at 16 miles road to Semnan leads off S.E., this is main road, that to Gor-i-Sofid being a mere track.
6	Khing -	30½	147	- - -	Leaving camping ground Gor-i-Sofid direction E.N.E. follow stream for 5 miles, valley for 1 mile cultivated, road deep and muddy. Thence over hill slopes, road everywhere easy; at 5 miles leave stream and cross low ridge, direction N.E. with easy ascent, total rise 800 feet, descent to valley of Jash 100 feet, steep. Thence down valley or plateau of Jash to narrow gorge at 15 miles, road narrow skirting left side of valley and following line of cultivation; hill slopes confine the valley to width of quarter to half and 1 mile; at 10¼ miles cultivation and pasture of village Sang-i-Sar, 1 fursakh from Semnan; at 11½ miles octagonal tower with domed roof 20 feet high, half mile right. Passing through gorge 100 to 200 feet wide with steep incline, length 500 to 600 yards, bend east, leaving stream flowing N.E. to crest of spur 15½ miles, ascent easy, road narrow, hill slope gentle, soil alluvial clay and gravel. Descend east over undulating hills of same formation, road mere track; at 17 miles road to Shah Mirza and Semnan turns off S.E., crossing dip

Route No. 23.—Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					in ridge to south, distance to Semnan 3 fursakhs, small plateau to right with ample room for camping. Continue with direction N.N.E. descending at 18 miles to open plateau fit for camping; at 21 miles descend into plateau of Aseran, water plenty, no supplies, descent easy, road mere track, total fall 900 feet.
				Aseran camping ground, 21 miles.	NOTE.—Shortly before reaching plateau road turns off west to Mazandaran (Sari and Amol), descending into gap in hills due west, second road goes back to join above-mentioned road to Semnan, both passable for horses and laden mules.
					Crossing Aseran plateau N.N.W., path leads over spurs with steep gradients, soil alluvial and soft sandstone, and bending N. & N.E. at 23½ miles strike small stream flowing W.S.W. to above-mentioned pass into Mazandaran. Thence follow stream through very narrow well cultivated glen to 25½ miles (level ground for small camp quarter mile square), where it branches. Follow right branch, direction E. by S., path in stony bed of torrent to 28½ miles, and take narrow track on right side of glen to crest at 30 miles, ascent steep, path narrow, soil alluvial, slope easy (total rise from 27½ miles, 900 feet)
					Turn N.E. from crest and camp at 30 miles on plateau of Khing, wide green plain and easy uplands, water and grass. No village, supplies, or wood.
					NOTE.—This is a long and difficult march, there being 11 miles of hilly ground with a long steep ascent at end of march. A guide should be taken from Gor-i-Sofid or Jash, for there are many cross roads. In summer guides are procurable from the nomad camps. Though there are some difficult gradients, the hill slopes are so easy and soil so light that a road for guns might be cut without much labour.
7	Rodbar -	13	160	- - -	Leave basin of Khing plateau, direction N.N.E., and shortly descend 600 feet down a bad path along hill side of sandy loose soil with soft sandstone cropping out in places. At 2 miles reach glen of Doz Gorrah draining E.S.E. towards Damghan, road to Semnan leads down valley.
				Khing Kharang, 2¾ miles.	Cross glen at 1½ miles N.N.E., ascend spur, passing the Imamzada Ibrahim, 300 feet, and descend on other side, 250 feet, path bad, soil loose and easy to work, to green glen of Khing Kharang with 2 hamlets for summer residence, 2½ miles; good camping ground and water, wood near. Thence cross glen E.N.E., and at 4 miles turn N.N.E. into green valley of Huskoh, about 1 mile in width, and at 6½ miles following valley bend N.E.; at 8 miles open valley ends, road enters defile of Ooraz, narrow, commanded by rocky heights easily accessible on both sides, descend 550 feet in 1½ miles, road narrow with steep drop to stream, and easy incline down its bed; at 2½ miles pass into Mazandaran down stream flowing north through narrow gap.
				Defile Ooraz, 8 miles.	
				Pass to Mazandaran, 9½ miles.	
					Continue N.E. through defile, 400 yards wide, commanded by rocky heights, ground level for 1½ miles, and pass out into open plateau of Rodbar, ascending gently, camp at head of plateau at 13 miles, camping ground 1 mile across. Water, forage, and wood plenty; no village.
					NOTE.—This march is perfectly practicable for horsemen and laden mules, the slopes are easy and soil light; a road might be made with ease; a good road goes back from this stage to Semnan.
8	Hosseinabad.	21	181	- - -	Leave camp and bear W.N.W., ascend narrow glen, soil gravelly, well clothed with grass, at 1 mile bend left and bearing west, at 1½ miles reach crest of first ascent, and bending right at 4 miles reach plateau God-i-Nasir; at 4½ miles reach crest of descent, road gravelly, ascent 300 feet.

Route No. 23.—Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					Descend 800 feet and reach plain of Fowlad Mohalla at 8¼ miles, road good with 2 springs of good water, heights distant 2 miles either hand, lower spurs round and easy. Bear a little W. of W.N.W. across plain, at 9 miles cultivation commences, ravine on right with a little water, at 10 miles cross ravine, deep perpendicular banks 8 or 10 feet, soil light and porous alluvium.
				Fowlad Mohalla, 10½ miles.	At 10½ miles reach Fowlad Mohalla, road passes through village, 200 houses with gardens, water from "kanat" good and in fair quantity. Thence over plain, cultivation right hand, continuing to 13th mile; at 15 miles cross a green pasture known as Milloo Malla, 3 or 4 square miles of grass; leave pasture at 16 miles, hills on left close in, valley contracts to quarter mile. At 19 miles ascend slight elevation and bend left bearing N.N.W. on trees of Hosseinabad; total descent, 1,100 feet.
					NOTE.—From Fowlad Mohalla one road goes N.E. to Mazandaran, Sari, &c., another S.E. to Tuderwar and Damghan. At 5½ miles from Fowlad Mohalla road crosses from Tuderwar to Mazandaran. Water in stream flowing through valley brackish. Good water in small quantity at Milloo pasture. Village Surkhdeh about half a mile from camping ground of Hosseinabad.
9	Chashma-i-Ali.	16½	197½		Leave Hosseinabad and bear N.E. over wide open plain, at 2½ miles bend easterly round a spur and then N.E. again, valley contracted to quarter mile, cross brook flowing in high banks, low spurs of limestone rock on either hand receding at easy slope. At 6 miles clear broken ground and enter another plain about 2 miles wide, soil sand and gravel, and surface covered with boulders, and cut up by small water-courses bearing N.E.; at 9½ miles bend E.N.E. with valley; at 11½ miles low spurs of hills on either side close in, road bending N.E.; at 11¾ miles road to Damghan strikes in right; at 15½ miles cross stream again and leave it flowing east, proceed N.E. by E.; at 16 miles reach slight elevation and sight village and gardens of Astana to right, in barren rocky glen and Chashma-i-Ali, a sacred grave, and spring; supplies at Astana, water ample.
10	Tak	19	216¾		Leave Chashma-i-Ali bearing south, cross stream, ascend 150 feet easy slope, and descend to village of Astana at 1 mile; road passes through village and gardens, stony, clear village at 1½, and cross stream flowing left, *i.e.*, east.
					Thence bearing a little S. of S.E., road passes through cultivation, hills commanding at distance of quarter mile on both hands; at 2½ miles recross stream and follow through cultivation to 3 miles, skirting hills on left; at 4 miles old fort of Baba Hafiz and garden, road stony and country undulating; at 6½ miles low hills with old fort, left; at 7½ miles hills recede on left, and at 8 miles gardens and spur of hills touch road on right, gardens watered by Chashma-i-Ali stream, 2 mud forts of Ayaun, 2 miles right under skirt of mountain, hills on left 1 mile; at 9 miles hills of red clay on left approach, and road passes some old mud ruins, bear east; at 9¾ miles road bends right and hills close in, stream right, road undulating but passable for guns. At 9¾ miles road to Damghan turns off right front, hills on right recede, hills left commanding road; at 11½ miles valley opens out, hills on left recede bearing E.N.E., at 16 miles cross small stream and bear south, road bends left, east again, at 2 miles right village of Gez, large gardens and enclosures; at 19 miles village of Tak, 150 houses, small stream of water and supplies, good ground for camping.

Route No. 23.—Teheran (Gulahek) to Shahrood by Firozkoh—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
11	Deh Mulla	20½	237	- - -	General direction N.W., road level, pass village of Beg, of 100 houses, hills left distant 4 miles; at 2 miles Karez stream flowing to Hosseinabad 2 miles right. At 4 miles join main road to Shahrood, which bends left; cross road to Ibrahimabad strikes off right; road stony. Thence along main road, general direction east by north to Shahrood. NOTE.—The marches on the main road have been described and surveyed more than once.

ROUTE NO. 24.—ASTRABAD TO TEHERAN BY SARI, AMOL, AND ASK.

1	Koord Mohalla.	16	—	- - - Shasht Kullah stream, 9½ miles.	Leave Astrabad by Mazandaran gate and bear west across plain covered with dense thorn brakes and scattered forest, road wet and heavy, at 2 miles bear W.S.W., and at 3½ miles strike Shah Abbas causeway and continue along it west at 9½ miles cross Shasht Kullah stream from Kafsligari and Miandarra, at 10 miles pass Imamzad of Roshanabad, at 16 miles reach village of Koord Mohalla, of 350 to 400 houses, half a mile off high road, right. NOTE.—From Shahst Kullah stream the path lying along side of the high road is exceedingly bad, winding through dense thorns and knee deep in mud. The causeway is almost entirely abandoned, the pavement being for the most part broken up and more difficult than the muddy tracks through the forest. In dry weather a good temporary road might be made with little labour, the line of the causeway being still clear of forest. Koord Mohalla lies in dense forest which extends to the shore 4 or 5 miles distant. Its port, Mulla Killah, the nearest to Astrabad, is much frequented by native boats. Supplies of all kinds procurable.
2	Hasht Tikkah (by Gez).	12¾	28¾	- - - Gez, 7 miles Gez stream.	Leave Koord Mohalla and bear W.S.W. and bend west at 2½ miles strike causeway and fallow it to 4¾ miles. Thence turn north and follow deep muddy road along narrow cleared line in forest, at 7 miles pass Gez, village of 300 houses, and cross small stream flowing in wide gravelly bed, at 7½ miles reach Kinara, collection of 100 wooden huts on shore of bay. Thence leaving shore and bearing nearly due west at 5 miles reach Hasht Tikkah, village of 200 houses, on border of Anizan Belook. Supplies ample. NOTE.—Road from Kinara mere track through forest and marshy rice lands. The road following the causeway and passing through Nowkhanda to Hasht Tikkah is a little shorter, but it is said to be even worse than the track leading through Gez.
3	Ashraf -	14½	43½	Guloogah stream.	Passing through Hasht Tikkah cross Guloogah stream dividing Astrabad and Mazanderan, and pass through village of Guloogah, 500 houses. Thence on west skirting causeway, at 2½ miles pass Imamzada Mulla Imad, at 8 miles causeway touches hill skirts. Thence on west following causeway, at 11½ miles pass circular tower and Imamzada Abdoolla on bank of small brook, villages Sarv and Pai-Sang off left, cross brook (low banks), at 12 miles leave causeway and skirting it reach Ashraf, 14½ miles. NOTE.—Country from Guloogah is comparatively open and well cultivated, the mountains covered with forest, the plain to a great extent cleared, and the sea-shore to a breadth inland of several miles entirely free of forest. Wheat to some extent takes the place of rice cultivation.
4	Pul Nikah	16	59½	- - -	Pass through town and follow high road skirting foot of bluff on which stands Castle of Seffiabad, bearing west, at ½ mile right village

Route No. 24.—Astrabad to Teheran by Sari, Amol, and Ask—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					of Zeriwan, hidden by trees; at 14 miles village of Chalapoor; at 16 miles village of Nika, 200 houses, scattered among gardens and woods, on both banks of stream known as Nikah or Shamsherbur, which has its source in Shahkoh, within 20 miles of Shahrood. NOTE.—Road throughout in excellent order for bridle road and passable for guns, 7 or 8 small rivulets with deep beds cross road, and are either bridged or ramped. Country to left open and cultivated, fields with wide straggling hedgerows, right, low rocky spurs cultivated to some extent, but generally covered with forest or dense under-growth; at 11 miles there is small clear spring of brackish water; good water abundant.
5	Sari	18	77½	Nikah stream	Cross Nikah stream by new bridge of two arches, each 18 to 20 feet wide, stream flowing in deep bed, steep banks, gravelly bottoms, fordable at all seasons save for few days after floods. Bear S.W. from stream through cultivated plain, broken by a few low wooded spurs from mountains to south. Road strikes off left up valley through Hazar Jareeb to Radkan, Shahkoh, Shahrood, Chashma-i-Ali, and Damghan. At 2½ miles mound with large flat rock to right, known as Takht-i-Rustum, and village Nowdyek, 30 houses: thence W.S.W. along high road in good order, country without forest, but fields small and strongly fenced; at 6½ miles cross by bad wooden bridge small stream of Dar Rood with perpendicular banks flowing in deep bed; at 7 miles pass through large village Soorat, and leaving high road pass across wide fields and pastures south for 3 miles and W.S.W. for 2½ miles; at 12½ miles regain the high road, and follow it west to Tejen stream 16½ miles. Cross Tejen by a fine wide stone bridge of 17 arches; stream wide, shallow, gravelly bed, fordable everywhere except in flood, banks low and steep, with open cultivated ground, hedgerows and copses for some miles on either side. Thence to Sari, 1½ miles, over paved causeway through hedgerows and fields.
				Dar Rood stream, 6½ miles.	
				Soorat, 7 miles.	
				Tejen river, 16½ miles.	
6	Said Mohalla.	13	90½	- - -	Leave Sari by Barfarosh gate and bear W.S.W. winding through fields and lanes to village and Imamzada of Esinda, 3½ miles. Thence through forest west for 4 miles, crossing 3 small streams with deep muddy beds and high banks by rickety wooden bridges; at 7½ miles enter cultivated clearing of village Teer Kullah and hamlet Az; at 8 miles cross Siah Rood, deep stream, muddy bed, and high banks, bridge old and rickety. Thence bear W.N.W. passing village of Fallah at 8½ miles. Thence still W.N.W. through forest bending N.W., and at 9½ miles reach extensive marsh in dense forest, crossed by raised causeway of sods in bad order: at 11 miles clear marsh and bear to west to village of Potem, 11¼ miles; at 11½ miles bear W.N.W. through open forest and clearings; at 12 miles enter dense marshy forest and bear west over deep muddy track across two small streams by wooden bridges; and at 13 miles reach village of Said Mohalla. Supplies procurable. NOTE.—Road throughout mere village track, always liable to be out of repairs, and certainly impassable after heavy rain. Good guide in any case necessary. Alternative road by Aliabad said to be longer and worse except in summer. Shah Abbas causeway being entirely destroyed. Road by Farahabad and Mashad Sir not passable in winter after rain without previous arrangement for boats to cross the several estuaries on the route.
				Esinda, 3½ miles.	
				Siah Rood stream, 8 miles.	
				Potem, 11¼ miles.	
7	Barfarosh	7	97½	- - -	From Said Mohalla, 1½ miles south, to the Tilar river, a stream of 50 yards width, girth deep, good gravelly bottom, unfordable only after heavy floods, no bridge except Pul-i-Sofid on
				Tilar stream 1½ miles.	

Route No. 24.—Astrabad to Teheran by Sari, Amol, and Ask—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
				Mari, 2 miles.	Ferozkoh road, 35 to 40 mles up. Thence S.W. passing at 2 miles village Mari, at 2½ miles bend west, at 3 miles pass village Kabir Chol, at 3½ miles enter open forest, and at 4 miles pass Imamzada Sultan Mahomed Nur and hamlet with ruins of brick fort off right. Thence 7 miles to Barfarosh across marshy pasture lands, road for most part narrow track, muddy, difficult after rain, good guide necessary, cultivated land strongly fenced, and waste land covered with impenetrable thorny scrub. Little forest.
				Kabir Chol, 3 miles.	
8	Amol	20	117½	- - -	Leave Barfarosh and passing the Bagh-i-Shah on an island in back water or spill of Babil river, at 1 mile cross that river by fine wide stone bridge known as Pul-i-Mahomed Hasan Khan, stream deep, muddy bottom with quicksands, fords every 2 or 3 miles, after heavy rain unfordable, banks wooded, steep. Thence S.W. 4½ miles over good dry track, country open and cultivated, strongly fenced, waste lands covered with thorny scrub, impassable for horse or man. Thence W.S.W. 7 miles over same country, villages small, hidden by trees and high scrub. Thence S.W. 1½ miles over similar country. Thence west for 1 mile. At 14½ miles pass canal Harri Killa by stone bridge, deep and wide. At 17 miles cross stream in deep bed by stone bridge, country much cut up by canals, usually cut deep in clay soil, and fenced with masses of bramble and thorn. At 20 miles enter Amol and cross Haras river by fine bridge of 2 arches.
				Babil river, 1 mile.	
				Haras river.	
					NOTE.—The Haras or Haraspai has a good sound gravelly bed, and is fordable everywhere except after spring floods. Country rises 5 or 6 miles from Amool, undulates slightly, and is well cultivated with rice, slightly fenced. Canals make country difficult to cross.
9	Parasp	19	136½	- - -	From Amol south over undulating country, well cultivated with rice, canals numerous but shallow, and fields slightly fenced. The track follows the Haras, which winds through a gravelly bed, banks high and well wooded; at 5 miles pass village of Alam Sar of 8 houses, and crossing canal by stone bridge enter heavy forest of alder, oak, and elm, filling valley of Haras and rising to 4,000 or 5,000 feet up mountain slopes. New road up valley to Damawand and Teheran commences at this point. For 2 or 3 miles in forest road deep and heavy, at 7 miles still following up left bank of the Haras, due south, forest thins, and road passes over firm green turf, valley open with fine park-like scenery. At 13 miles valley narrows to width of river bed, and road rises on hill side above stream. Thence it continues for 6 miles south, along bank 50 to 60 feet above stream, hill slopes losing their dense covering of forest and becoming more precipitous as the valley rises. At 19 miles reach Parasp, road side station with house belonging to the Governor of district and bath built for his use. There is public accommodation in shape of dark caves, cut in an old gravel bank of river. No supplies procurable save barley.
				Alam Sar, 5 miles.	
10	Baijan	23½	159½	- - -	From Parasp new road follows up left bank of river to bridge of Lash, built in old style, narrow and with high pitch (new bridge under construction) 6 miles. Thence up right bank to junction of Kumoorood stream, from west 7½ miles, and to junction of Hardarood, a stream one-third size of Haras, flowing from Nur country west, 11 miles. At 12½ miles reach Kullooband, station of Sappers working on road, also halting place for caravans, accommodation in caves; no supplies. Thence following right bank, south, at 14 miles cross small tributary stream, the Annawar, by new bridge; at 16 miles cross Haras by Panjah bridge, village of that name of 60 houses lying half a mile distant in lateral glen to right; at 19 miles over bad
				Kullooband, 12½ miles.	

Route No. 24.—Astrabad to Teheran by Sari, Amol, and Ask—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					road, narrow, and strewn with boulders, pass caves of Kohrood, halting place for caravans, village of 100 houses lying behind hill to right; at 21½ miles pass caves of Ahyoh, below which new bridge is being built. At 23 miles cross to right bank by old bridge of Baijan, and at 23½ miles reach village of Baijan of 20 houses. No serai and accommodation. Supplies scanty. NOTE.—Valley from Parasp narrow, slopes precipitous, rocky, destitute of vegetation after first 2 or 3 miles, summit almost inaccessible. Rocks slates, limestones, and black and white marble occasional indications of coal, with limestone strata below and clay above, trap very frequent forming entire spurs, ascent 2,700 feet.
11	Rahna -	15	174½	- - - Malik Band defile, 2 miles.	From Baijan follow valley south, road good for 1 mile to narrow gorge and old bridge of Killa-band. At 1½ miles cross left bank by Pul-i-Gilara and continue south, at 2 miles enter defile of Malikband, pass ruined bridge 60 or 70 feet above stream and bend S.E., at 3 miles cross to right bank and clear defile, road unfinished, cut in face of cliffs overhanging stream. Thence on S.E. to village Wana, 6 miles, valley more open, but enclosing slopes precipitous; at 7½ miles pass village Ghoomdash, high above right bank, cross by wooden bridge to that bank and bend W.S.W. Thence following windings of valley over good road, bending gradually south; at 12 miles pass village of Gaznak, 50 houses. Thence 3 miles with steep descent to Rahna, large village on spur of Damawand. Supplies ample.
12	Ah -	22	196½	- - - Cross Haras. Pass Imamzada Hashim, height 7,500 feet.	From Rahna west over good road passing at half mile, village Ask on bank of stream, 1,000 feet below. Thence bend W.S.W. and ascend good road cut in face of steep slope of volcanic débris to 3½ miles, ascent 1,200 feet. Thence descend west over good road to the Haras, 7 miles. Cross river by good stone bridge, and at 7½ miles reach stone Rabat, at junction of Lar stream from west. Thence following lateral glen S.S.E. at 11½0 miles reach small stone Rabat, road stony and narrow, ascent steady but easy; at 11 miles bend south and continue ascending through rough glens about S.E. to 13 miles. Thence over plateau to Imamzada Hashim and Rabat at 14 miles. Thence descend good road leading to town Damawand; at 15½ miles leave road, and follow track bearing west over small plateau and through rough glens, gradually descending and following small stream to village Ah, 22 miles. Large village, ample supplies.
13	Teheran -	41	237½	- - -	From Ah follow glen of Roodhind, S.W., at 3 miles pass that village off right and cross low ridges into Boomhind glen, at 4 miles strike main road and turn west, at 6 miles reach Boomhind. (On route No. 23.) Thence to Teheran, 35 miles.

Route No. 25.—Astrabad to Shahrood by Gez and the Chalchalyan Pass.

1	Galoogah	29	—	- - -	See Route No. 24.
2	Radkan -	12	41	- - -	From Guloogah a long ascent of 5 miles over a forest covered spur, road steep and bad, considered impassable for laden beasts after melting of snow and in rainy weather. Total ascent not less than 5,000 feet.
				Bagh-i-Kullah, 8 miles.	From crest of spur steep descent of 3 miles to Bagh-i-Kullah, small hamlet of 8 houses. Thence 4 miles to Radkan, village on hill side above Asp-o-Neza or Nikah stream.
3	Asp-o-Neza	8	49	- - -	From Radkan steep descent to stream, follow valley S.E. over good to Asp-o-Neza, at 2 miles

Route No. 25.—Astrabad to Shahrood by Gez and the Chalchalyan Pass—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					pass the Meel-i-Radkan, masonry tower with Cufic inscription. At 3 miles road from Chashma-i-Ali strikes in from right at gorge of the Sawar glen. At 8 miles open ground fit for large camp at mouth of Asp-o-Neza defile. Nearest village Hajiabad, 2 miles.
4	Shahkoh Paeen.	13½	62½	- -	Leave camping ground and follow up stream, at half mile enter narrow defile Asp-o-Neza, overhung by high cliffs, summits of mountains 2,000 to 3,000 feet high, flat and open, at 2¾ miles defile closes in and road winds through narrow gorge—the Tang-i-Loodian—about 80 yards wide, closed in by stupendous cliffs of limestone strata curiously contorted, for the most part vertical or nearly so. Thence defile opens out, hills recede and are well wooded. At 7 miles glen opens left, up which lies road to Hajiabad, small village on plateau. Thence 1 mile following up stream, road stony and rough; at 8 miles cliffs close in forming narrow pass of quarter mile in length, at one point contracted to about 50 yards, overhung by high cliffs, guns might pass along shallow bed of stream. Thence defile slightly more open, hamlet and mill of Burzánday reached at 9½ miles, Thence through defile narrow and tortuous, road fairly good and passable for wheels taking advantage of ground; at 11¼ miles reach the Doab-i-Burzánday, road turns left up glen to Shahkoh Bala, another road up small glen to Shahkoh Paeen, former said to be shorter but difficult. At 12 miles path from Chardeh (Route No. 28), taken at times by Persian troops, strikes in winding down lateral glen. At 13½ miles village Shahkoh Paeen, situated in deep glen at foot of high serrated line of cliffs known as Shahkoh. The two villages have 100 houses, considerable wheat crops and good water.
5	Tash Rabat	15½	78	- - - Chalchalyan Pass, 8,600 feet.	Leave camping ground above village on bearing North 22° East, cross low spur and descending steep slope cross cultivated plateau, and pass down short steep descent, into defile with stream flowing E.S.E., the upper course of the Nikah stream eventually bending N.E. Following stream, at 2½ miles path up glen to right leading to Chárbágh, at 5 miles, road turns up hill side on left of defile to Shahkoh Bala, distant one fursakh; at 5½ miles, mill and small stream from glen right, near bank of main stream, blue clay strata, showing thin seams of good coal. Thence still following stream up narrow glen of Elyanay; at 8 miles turn up hills on left over easy pass of Chalchalyan; road winding over slopes wooded with cypress; at 9½ miles reach crest of ascent, 8,600 feet above sea, and descend over open hill slopes to 11 miles where route enters barren defile of Ganda-Ab. Thence follow defile beside fresh stream of clear water to small mud "Rabat" at junction of main road from Astrabad, 15½ miles. Camping ground in valley, up which runs road to Astrabad (Route No. 26) and Telegraph line. Road on the whole good, and taking advantage of ground, practicable for guns. Ascent to pass and descent of 1,400 feet to Tash, particularly easy, and surface of road good. First two slopes below Shahkoh Paeen might present some difficulty, but soil is light and easy to work. Wood, water, and forage are procurable at any point. Defile leading to and from pass commanded by hills receding with easy slopes. Village of Tash, 50 houses, lies 1 mile from junction of roads above mentioned.
6	Shahrood -	19½	97½	- -	Follow stream down defile, at 1½ miles pass ruined "Rabat," right, and ascend low spur, at 3½ miles descend easy slopes, and enter wide open valley, with village 4 or 5 miles right.

Route No. 25.—Astrabad to Shahrood by Gez and the Chalchalyan Pass—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes. Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					Follow barren valley with enclosing hills running about due east, and at 9 miles touch stream of good water flowing east through it, at 12½ miles ruined fort on hill, half mile right, and another at foot in plain. Shahwar mountain with snow, on left; at 14¾ miles pass village of Kellateh, quarter mile left, hill skirt quarter mile to right, at 17 miles turn south into valley between two rocky spurs, cross wide shallow water-course and continue south to gap in spur running from north to south, cross spur at 19 miles, and bending east at 19½ miles enter the gardens of Shahrood.
					Road good and passable for wheels, save the last rocky pass, which may be turned by detour of 2 or 3 miles, 4 miles from Shahrood town of Bostam, lies off left. Total descent 2,200 feet.
					NOTE.—The following bearings on the route through defiles of Asp-o-Neza and Shahkoh may assist in giving an exact idea of the nature of the most difficult portion of the country intervening between Shahrood and Mázandarán on the line of the Nikah stream, which line undoubtedly opposes fewer obstacles than any other to the construction of a road for wheeled conveyances.
					Asp-o-Neza to Shahkoh.
					Bear - - 109°.
					1 Mile - - 130°, east peak Shahkoh 135°.
					1¼ „ - - 135°.
					¼ „ - - 135°.
					¼ „ - - 85°.
					1 „ - - 60°.
					¼ „ - - 80°.
					¼ „ - - 85°.
					1 „ - - 105°, east peak Shahkoh 133°.
					¼ „ - - 107°.
					¼ „ - - 108°.
					¼ „ - - 150°.
					¼ „ - - 110°.
					¼ „ - - 115°.
					¼ „ - - 115°.
					¼ „ - - 80°.
					¼ „ - - 75°.
					¼ „ - - 165°.
					¼ „ - - 90°.
					1¼ „ - - 178°.
					Shahkoh to Tash Rabat.
					Bear - - 22°, east peak Shahkoh 143°.
					¼ Mile - - 55°.
					1¼ „ - - 115°, east peak Shahkoh, 173°
					1¼ „ - - 65°.
					¼ „ - - 90°.
					2 „ - - 90°.
					¼ „ - - 95°.
					1 „ - - 85°.
					1¼ „ - - 110°.
					¼ „ - - 82°
					¼ „ - - 70°.
					¼ „ - - 68°
					¼ „ - - 35°
					1 „ - - 70°.
					¾ „ - - 130°.
					2¼ „ - - 87°
					1¼ „ - - 104°.
					Tash Rabat to Shahrood from junction of roads.
					Bear - - 124°.
					¼ Mile - - 100°.
					1 „ - - 164°.
					1¼ „ - - 140°
					¼ „ - - 116°.
					¼ „ - - 123°.
					1¼ „ - - 96°.
					1¼ „ - - 96°.
					1¼ „ - - 92°
					1¼ „ - - 78°.
					3 „ - - 54°, at 12 miles Shahwar 326°
					¼ „ - - 44°
					1 „ - 46°

Route No. 25.—Astrabad to Shahrood by Gez and the Chalchalyan Pass—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					¼ Mile - - 80°. ¼ „ - - 90°, forward bearing Bostam 81°. 1 „ - - 116°. ¼ „ - - 146°, back bearing Bostam 75°. ½ „ - - 180°.

Route No. 26.—Shahrood to Astrabad by Kuzlook.

1	Tash -	5 fur.	—	- - -	See Route No. 25.
2	Camp -	7 „	12fur.	- - -	No village, ample ground for camping, with good stream of water. At quarter fursakh of steep ascent, reach crest of Kotal-i-Wajmainoo and descend some distance to Kabr-i-Sofeed. At 3 miles reach Haft Chashma, mud caravanserai, road level; at 5½ miles reach Kotal-i-Jaling Maling; at 7 miles Robat-i-Sofeed caravanserai; at 9 miles pass ruins of Aliabad; at 10 miles reach Kuzlook pass over level road Descent to plain below easy, road good, reach foot of pass at 18 miles.
3	Astrabad	4 fur.	16	- - -	Thence 2½ fursakhs or 10 miles to camping ground in forest covered valley of lower range, over heavy unsound road, through marshy forest-covered country. Note.—This is the best road to Astrabad from Shahrood, and is always taken by the Persian artillery. It was closed for many years by the Turkomans, but is now as safe as any other.

Route No. 27.—Astrabad to Shahrood by Nikah.

1	Guloogah	29	—	- - -	See Route No. 23.
2	Ashraf -	14½	43½	- - -	Do. do.
3	Nikah -	16	59½	- - -	Do. do.
4	Radkan -	40	99½	- - -	Do. No. 25.
	Asp-o-Neza	8	107½	- - -	Do. do.
	Shahkoh -	13½	121	- - -	
	Tash -	15½	136½	- - -	
	Shahrood	19½	156	- - -	

Route No. 28.—Chashma-i-Ali to Mazandaran by Shamsherbur Pass.

1	Russoo or Sawar.	23½	—	- - -	Leave Chashma-i-Ali and bear N.E. for gap between 2 low spurs. At 2 miles pass through gap, road good through open valley. Thence bending towards hills on right to village Kelatch at 8 miles, valley cultivated and open, breadth 2 miles, road good. Thence passing through and skirting hills to head of valley and village Chardeh, 12 miles, road good through well-cultivated plain, village large, ample water, and extensive grain crops Turn from Chardeh N. by W. over easy descent at 16 miles, with one steep incline of a mile, over good road, reach Sar-i-Hallala, 1,050 feet above Chardeh. Thence across wide open level plateau, Kushta-Dasht, to descent, 18 miles. Thence descent of 1 mile over bad road, impassable for guns or mounted men, to Tang-i-Shamsherbur, a curious natural passage, through which stream finds its way. The passage is confined by two vertical strata of limestone about 30 feet high, 150 yards long, 18 feet wide, exit by vertical gap in limestone strata 14 feet wide.
				Sar-i-Hallala, height, 6,500 feet.	

Route No. 28.—Chashma-i-Ali to Mazandaran by Shamsherbur Pass—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Furskhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
	Asp-o-Neza	8	26½	- - -	Thence steep descent, known as Tamash Tang, over bad road for half a mile, and following defile commanded on both hands by precipitous spurs—road improving as defile widens—to grazing ground of Russoo in a swampy plain draining N.W., but with ample camping ground on hill skirts, wood, and water 23½ miles. Thence 3 miles across grazing ground of Sawar, which has width of about 2 miles through narrow gap in low easy spurs of chalk and clay to Asp-o-Neza stream, down which runs one of the main caravan routes to the Caspian (see Routes No. 27 and 25). Ample camping ground on banks of stream. NOTE.—The pass of Shamsherbur might be turned by mounted men from either side keeping to the plateau above the pass. The west side is the easiest. The ascents to the plateaux on either side are so easy that light guns might be taken over without difficulty. From Chardeh there is a direct road going by Russoo, but practicable for footmen only. From Chardeh a good road goes also across the plateaux and spurs of Shahkoh to that village. This is used by Persian infantry or horsemen *en route* to Shahrood. From the Asp-o-Neza is a road over the Jehan Numa hill and the Jaling Maling Pass to Astrabad.
	Radkan -	5	31½	- - -	From Asp-o-Neza stream to Nikah in Mazandaran (see Route No. 25).
	Nikah - -	40	71½	- - -	

ROUTE No. 29.—MAZINAN TO JAGATAI IN JOUVEN VALLEY.

1	Firoomad	17½	—	- - -	Leaving caravanserai pass N.W. through ruins of Bahmanabad, at 1 mile strike across plain to foot of hills, road level and good. At 4½ miles enter pass, narrow defile, enclosed by low hills of easy slope, everywhere accessible, upper part for half mile narrow and tortuous, with one short steep pitch of 150 yards, which would be difficult for guns; at 8½ miles emerge on open plateau extending for 12 to 15 miles W., N., and E., cross this to Firoomad, 17½ miles, road perfectly level and good, large village of 400 houses. Ample water and supplies.
2	Jagatai -	30½	48	- - -	From village north across plain undulating easily, at 4½ miles reach small stream of water flowing to Firoomad, and enter narrow defile, hills low, easy slope, crests formed of ledges of trap; at 5½ miles defile opens out to half mile, stream twists and is crossed frequently; at 5¾ miles very marked conical trap peak bearing N. 18° E., at 5¾ miles bearing N. 5° W., peak of main ridge, said to be visible from all parts of Jouven valley, at 9 miles reach village Manida, watered by good stream, 20 houses, scanty supplies, up glen is footpath to Jagatai. Thence leave defile and turn across main ridge up easy ascent, height above village 600 feet, at 10 miles reach crest of ridge, and descend steep, rocky, and narrow path, not difficult for horses or mules and practicable for camels, into defile narrow and commanded by rocky inaccessible heights; at 11½ miles leave defile and bend south on narrow path over easy slopes of clays and marls, crossing a few ravines with steep slopes. These may be avoided by path continuing down defile and skirting through plain, adding 2 or 3 miles to march. At 19 miles reach village Kohsar; water and supplies scanty. At 21½ miles cross stream Ab-i-Shata perennial. At 24¾ miles pass village of Dish Kiyan, water and supplies. At 29½ pass through village of Guff, and at 30½ turn N.E. down ravine to town of Jagatai. Ample water and supplies, with good camping ground.

Route 29.—Mazinan to Jagatai in Jouven Valley—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
3	Kamaistan	18	66	- - -	From Jagatai across a level uncultivated plain for 18 miles, crossing several small streams of water, to the left a line of villages 3 or 4 miles distant — principal, Samghan, Illarabad, Ak Kalla, Shahristanak, and extensive ruins of Karimabad—to Kamaistan, small village of few houses, with good crops of wheat and barley; water scanty. NOTE.—Village of Nikah, 5 miles further, larger, better supplied, and with ample water.
4	Rabat-i-Gez	46	112	- - -	Across a level cultivated plain covered with villages for 28½ miles, thence 17¼ miles over dry tract, one reservoir of water half way to village of Rabat or Rabat-i-Gez, for last 3 miles plain much cut up by deep ravines and closing in to 8 or 10 miles. Water at stage bad and scanty, good water at village Khushab, 3 miles right on hill skirt. Supplies of grain, &c. procurable.
5	Madan -	25½	137½	- - -	Over undulating uncultivated plain to Jumbarjo, small village, foot of hill known as Koh Madan, 14 miles, thence over low hills with uniformly easy slopes, passing under the small fortified village of Pahnay, across the Julga-i-Batow, to the village of Madan, 11¼ miles, road good, several springs *en route*. Madan has good water, but supplies scanty and dear; nothing grown in the village. NOTE.—Direct route to Nishapoor leaves Rabat about E.S.E., and passes across the plain known as Julga-i-Shorab out of the Jouven valley into the Nishapoor plain, and joins the road by this route 7 or 8 miles from Nishapoor.
6	Nishapoor.	28	175½	- - -	Pass out of Madan glen S.E. over low hills into narrow valley draining S.E., and enclosed by low ranges with uniformly easy slope, following water-course for 8 miles reach bank of brook flowing from Marousk valley. Thence bending south and still following drainage line down broad undulating valley into the plain of Nishapoor, at 14 miles leave the stream flowing south, cross at 16 miles a stream 1 foot deep, 10 feet wide, flowing from Khanlook, large village in valley of main chain to left and passing villages of Hissar and Aliabad. Thence 12 miles across level, cultivated plain with numerous villages to Nishapoor. NOTE.—The Jouven valley may be entered from Jah Jerm by a perfectly open good road, the distance to Jagatai being 10 fursakhs, or at the Pul-i-Abreshum, 7 or 8 miles from Abbasabad on the high road, from whence to Shefflabad through an open valley is a distance of 4 fursakhs, thence 5 fursakhs to Jagatai up the valley. Both these routes are at present unsafe without guards. From Mazinan to Jagatai there is a short cut due N.E. passing to south of peak of Koh Zar; but passable only for footmen. The undernoted bearings on the route, which lies through a tract of country little known, may be of use. *Mazinan to Firoomad.* At 1 mile bear - N. 5° W. to pass. „ 3½ „ „ - N. 20° W. enter defile. „ 1½ „ „ - N. 25° W. „ 1½ „ „ - N. W. „ 1½ „ „ - N. for 300 yards to crest and open plateau. From crest „ - N. 15° W. to village Firoomad. *Firoomad to Jagatai.* Forward bearing N. 15° E. ¼ mile N. 1 „ „ 15° W. 2½ „ „ 10° „ Enter defile. 1 „ „ 14° „ ½ „ „ 20° E. ¼ „ „ 50° „ ¼ „ „ 15° „

Route 29.—Mazinan to Jagatai in Jouven Valley—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					¼ mile N. 50° E. 1 „ „ 15° „ Crest pass. 1 „ „ 30° „ Descent. 1 „ „ 10° W. 1¼ „ „ 50° E. 2¼ „ N.E. 1¾ „ S. 80° E. 3¼ „ E. 2¼ „ N. 70° E. 3¼ „ S. 60° „ 2¼ „ „ 50° „ ¾ „ „ 70° „ ¼ „ „ 80° „ 1¼ „ „ 80° „ 2¾ „ N.E. ¼ mile. *Jagatai to Kamaistan.* Bear 75° (Aladagh 0° N.). At 7¼ miles 84° (Koh Shahjehan 50°). On Kamaistan (Aladagh 343°). (Koh Shahjehan 41° 30′). *Kamaistan to Rabat-i-Gez.* Bear 65°. At 1 mile road left, Shamsabad, Kummarabad. At 5 miles large village Nikah, 5¼ miles 112° 30′. 3 miles 125° Large village; Ismailabad, Sahibabad, Hosseinabad, and other villages off left. 6¼ „ 114° Ibrahimabad. 2¼ „ 116° Hukmabad. 4¼ „ 111° Kelat-i-Arab, fine village, 100 houses. 3 „ 108° Ibrahimabad. 4 „ 115° Hosseinabad. To Rabat-i-Gez, 17¾ miles. *Rabat-i-Gez to Madan.* Bear - - 88°. 3¾ miles - - 92°. 5 „ - - 76°. 5¼ „ E. village of Jumbarjo. 6 „ - - 105° Pahnay fort. 1¾ „ - - 80°. 4 „ - - 79° to Madan, 2 miles. *Madan to Nishapoor.* Bear - - 90°. 8 miles - - 145°. 7 „ - - 140°. 3 „ - - 120° to gardens of Nishapoor.

Route No. 30.—Mashad to Koochan and Bujnoord.

1	Kazimabad	12	—	- - -	See Route No. 5.
2	Goonabad	14	26	- - -	Ditto.
3	Chinnaran	12	38	- - -	Ditto.
4	Saidabad -	16¼	54¼	- - -	Road N.W. across cultivated land and pastures, keeping about centre of valley—at that point 18 to 20 miles wide—level and good throughout. To the right of Saidabad about 6 miles is Radkan, to the left 10 miles in deep recess in the mountains, Akhlomad, large picturesque village of 100 houses, near which lead mine is worked. Saidabad, village of 80 houses, without gardens, standing on fine expanse of pasture, at head of marsh draining into Kashaf Rood.
5	Jafirabad -	27¼	82½	- - -	Leaving Saidabad still N.W. road passes across open pastures for 2 or 3 miles, at 4 miles ruined Rabat Bairam Shah is reached, "Kanat" of brackish water flows across road, and pastures are replaced by barren wastes, covered with saline efflorescence, and growing nothing but salsola and thistles, road level and good; at 7 miles on left hand side small brick Rabat, built over well, Hauz Pas-i-Tappa, Chandar Karbal.

Route No. 30.—Mashad to Koochan and Bujnoord—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
					first stage on route to Jouven, 5 miles left; at 15 miles across barren plain half mile from road ruins of old fort, a conspicuous landmark, villages lie at foot of hills on either side 8 to 10 miles distant, road from Radkan comes in right rear; at 17½ miles further road strikes off left to Khamsabad, and other villages on road to Sultan Maidan; at 17¾ miles further path leads off right to Daootli, on Deregez road; at 20 miles pass village of Shorcha, 1 mile right, valley cultivated and undulating easily. At 22½ miles path strikes off right, at 27½ miles arrive Jafirabad, situated on high open ground, about centre of valley. Village, 40 houses; supplies plentiful; water slightly brackish; road good throughout; no village near road between Jafirabad and Saidabad.
6	Koochan -	16	98½	- - -	Strike into main road quarter mile from village and follow it N.W. Plain broken by low undulating hills, bends W.N.W., and drains in that direction, high undulations from the Koh-i-Kushgha Kya, crossing the valley join the northern range and form the watershed line of the Attrek and Tejen, country cultivated extensively without irrigation. At 9 miles pass large village Sarkhan of 80 to 100 houses, half mile right, small hamlets at base of both ranges of hills and plain dotted with nomad camps. At 16 miles reach town of Koochan, lying due N.W. of Jafirabad, at foot of northern range. Supplies and water plentiful.
7	Faizabad -	18=4½ fur.	116½	- - -	Over level cultivated plain, Jafirabad, 8 miles; Parez 500 houses, 14 miles; Faizabad, large village, 60 houses; supplies plentiful.
8	Sherwan -	12=3 fur.	128½	- - -	Over level plain well irrigated and cultivated, road level and good. Sherwan, walled town of 1,000 houses or 6,000 souls. Supplies and water plentiful.
9	Chinnaran	22	150½	- - -	Leave Sherwan by S.W. gate and turn west up valley, passing through well irrigated and cultivated plain; at half mile road down valley of Germekhans strikes off right bearing N.W. to narrow pass closed by fort of Rezabad, distant 8 to 10 miles (an alternative road to Bujnoord). Large village of Ziarat, 2 miles, north side of valley, shrine and Imamzada, at 2 miles cross stream of Koochan (Attrek) flowing in deep bed with steep gravelly banks, passable at all times, both banks about equal heights and approaches level. At 2 miles pass Kara Kazan spring, by local repute highest source of Attrek, flowing even in seasons of severest drought. Thence road approaches hill skirts. Pass at 3 miles village Hosseinabad of 100 houses, at 5 miles road passes through low rocky hills known as the Panj Biradaran, and ascends by easy undulations over open plateau to foot of pass 9 miles, at 9½ miles rise 450 feet, reach crest of pass and enter plateau of Hazar Jareeb, 10 miles by 25 miles, draining north into Germekhans. Left, 2 miles, village and gardens of Zobaran, 150 houses, descend 200 feet to stream draining plateau, village Abdullabad, 1 mile right on bank stream, cross stream and enter glen, enclosed by low undulations, at 12 miles road comes in from left rear from Zobaran. Guns from Koochan take this road, leaving main road to Sherwan at Parez, 16 miles from that place. Follow glen west, and at 16 miles emerge on open plateau and bear N.W. At 18 miles easy descent into glen of stream known as Germekhans-i-Chinnaran, road fairly good, low hills commanding pass on either hand easily accessible. At 22 miles reach gardens of Chinnaran, extending for quarter mile up glen, village inhabited by Shahdilloo Koords, 100 houses. Supplies ample.

Route No. 30.—Mashad to Koochan and Bujnoord—*cont.*

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
10	Bujnoord -	14	164½	- - -	At half mile from village strike into main road down glen, narrow and cultivated, commanded by low undulations. Bearing N.W. at 3 miles pass Pakhai half mile up glen, left, at 4½ miles, Geukkamar, hamlet at foot of rocky hill; at 5½ miles stream disappears in narrow gorge to north, road turns out of glen up low pass over downs of chalk and marls, known as Ak Kotal, at 6 miles reach foot of pass. Thence over low undulations bearing on Bujnoord N.N.W., at 9½ miles descend into plain of Bujnoord, thence to town, 2 miles over pastures, and 2½ over well cultivated plain. Town surrounded by old wall and ditch, has population of about 5,000. Good bazars, supplies cheap.

Route No. 31.—Bujnoord to Jah Jarm.

1	Shoughan	28	—	- - -	Leaving town bear south across cultivated plain, at 1 mile enter hill skirts, at 1½ miles pass Killa Aziz, thence bear S.S.W., at 3 miles cross small stream Shahjo, flowing into plain of Bujnoord, and enter gardens of Killa Ali Verdi Khan, at 3½ miles pass that village, at 4½ miles over hill skirts pass stream of Besh Pardash and bear S.W. through low spurs from Aladagh, at 6 miles pass village Matraloo, road good between low hills; at 7 miles pass Arg-i-Mohamad Khan, right, at 8½ miles reach Darband-i-Firoza, pass between mountains Firoza or Salig and Aladagh, wide and open, road good, greatest ascent 150 feet. At 9 miles pass Firoza left, at foot Koh Salig, at 10½ miles descend to stream, at 11 miles road turns off left to Isferayin. Thence bear west, at 15 miles emerge on high plateau connecting Koh Salig and Aladagh, at 19 miles descend slightly over plain Takhta Yashashi to 22½ miles, and pass spring and hamlet Ab-i-Shereen, road turns off left to village Tawar, and thence to Chardeh; at 24½ miles pass Hissar, 15 houses, and enter valley of Shoughan, at 28 miles village of Shoughan. 100 houses. Supplies and water plentiful. NOTE.—Road good, passable for wheels. Direct road to Chardeh turns off from village Hissar, thence distant from it 5 fursakhs.
2	Chardeh or Sangkhas.	17½	45½	- - -	Bear south from Shoughan over level cultivated plain for 1½ miles. Thence enter hill skirts, at 5 miles direct road from Bujnoord and Tawar comes in left rear, enter open glen leading to pass; at 7½ miles pass village Darband to left of ravine, head of Shoughan valley; road level and good. Thence enter level plain, at 11½ miles pass village Kofr, right, road to Isferayin turns off left; at 17½ miles, crossing level alluvial plain, enter garden walls of Sangkhas, 200 houses. Supplies ample; water slightly brackish.
3	Jah Jarm -	26	71½	- - -	Bear west from Sangkhas, and at 1 mile pass village Khudashah, 1 mile right. Thence 2 miles through scattered cultivation, at 3 miles bend S.W., at 4 miles Jafirabad off left, at 5 miles, 1 mile right, village of Jurbat. Thence over dry sandy plain destitute of water and scantily covered with salsola and thorny herbs, dry cistern (Houz) 11 miles, to right of Houz, distant 2½ to 3 miles, lies large mound of bright red colour at foot of Koh Chakah, where is a small spring of good water. At 12 miles bear west, plain sandy and gravelly, hill slopes right, distant 1 to 2 miles, at 3 miles pass old "Kanat." Thence descending slightly at 26 miles reach town of Jah Jarm, 300 houses. Water and supplies ample.

ROUTE No. 32.—JAH JARM TO SHAHROOD.

No. of Stage.	Stage.	Distance. Miles or Fursakhs.	Distance. Total.	Rivers, Passes, Villages, &c.	Remarks.
1	Rabat	7 fur.	—	- - -	Road skirts Koh Nikah and thence traverses open plain to Rabat, village of 80 houses. Supplies and water plentiful: 3 fursakhs from Jah Jerm is the spring of Kababa, no other water on road.
2	Maghas Gilan.	7 „	14 fur.	- - -	Through level open plain, at 4 fursakhs spring of Chahoor, at 6 fursakhs Gilan Magas, 100 houses. Supplies and water ample.
3	Bostam	4 „	18 „	- - -	Over uncultivated plain to village and cultivation of Bostam.

ROUTE No. 33.—CHENARAN (MASHAD) ISFERAYIN AND JOUVEN.

1	Chandarkarbal.	5 fur. 20 miles.	—	- - -	Village of 5 or 6 houses and a number of tents of Koords, across a valley and through skirts of main chain. Supplies precarious.
2	Sultan Maidan.	5 fur. 20 miles.	10 fur. 40 miles.	- - -	Large village of 20 houses with fort. Supplies obtainable.
3	Bam	5 fur. 20 miles.	15 fur. 60 miles.	- - -	Road through open valley, village of 50 houses. Supplies procurable.
4	Suffiabad	5 fur. 20 miles.	20 fur. 80 miles.	- - -	Large village of 200 houses in valley opening into valley of Jouven. Supplies ample.
5	Kelat-i-Arab.	7 fur. 28 miles.	27 fur. 108 miles.	- - -	See Route No. 29, stage IV., for village, and route on to Jagatai and Mazinan.

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM ON THE CONDITION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE TURKOMAN TRIBES OF MERVE.

No. 16, dated 22nd Febrvary 1875.

From CAPTAIN THE HON. G. C. NAPIER, on special duty in Persia, to C. U. AITCHISON, ESQ., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honour to enclose a copy of a memorandum on the condition and external relations of the Turkoman tribes of Merve, which I have prepared at the request of Her Majesty's Minister at Teheran.

Merve. Results of recent events.

The oasis of Merve, though distant over 160 miles from Mashad, 90 miles from the nearest point of Persian territory, and more than 200 miles from Herat, has been brought by the course of recent events into direct political connection with Khorassan and Afghanistan. It is to the countries in their rear that the tribes occupying the oasis now look for assistance against an enemy, and it is there only that in the event of defeat they could now hope to find a safe and permanent asylum for their women, children, and cattle. To the mounted men of the tribe the whole expanse of the desert is open, and its scanty pasturage and brackish springs would suffice them; but their immense herds of camels and flocks of sheep and their fine studs could not exist, save on the banks of the Murghab or on the pastures of the Heri-rood.

In times gone by, the Turkoman was in the advance guard of Sunnite and Usbeg invasion, continually pressing upon the frontier of the Persian Shiahs, playing, in fact, the old *rôle* of Turan, with the additional incentive of a fierce religious hatred for the Iranian. His back was to the north, where he found rewards, honours, a market for his human goods, and often substantial aid in the shape of Usbeg armies; his face to the south, where was a fair field, from which to reap his harvest of plunder. All this is now changed, and the change is one fully appreciated by the tribes, who have turned their faces to the north and look southwards for aid. The conquest of Khiva and the subjection of Bokhara by Russia have cut them off from their feudal allegiance to the Usbeg dynasties, and severed the religious ties that bound them to those states. To the east and west they are isolated and separated by immense waterless deserts from their kinsmen of the Arsari, Yamoot and Chaudor tribes.

Change in external relations of tribes and their isolation.

The tract permanently occupied by the Tekkah Turkomans lies more than two days' march from the point where the waters of the Murghab are lost in the desert, and includes the site of the ancient city of Merve.

The oasis.

The cultivated land lies along the course of the river for 3 or 4 fursukhs (12 to 16 miles), and has a width of 1 to 1½ fursukhs, or 4 to 6 miles. Beyond extends a circle of pasture land, having a radius of 7 to 8 fursukhs, and enclosed, save along the banks of the stream, by a desert of shifting sand, extending to the Oxus and the Tejen stream to the south-west.

The central point of the settlement appears to be the new fort lately built by the Tekkah as a place of refuge for their families and property.

New fort of Merve.

As described to me, the fort is defended on one side by the Murghab, flowing between steep banks, deep and unfordable; on the other a moat, with a depth of 10 to 12 yards, and a width of 30 yards filled from the river. The *dêwlai* of the moat has been thrown up into a high thick rampart with, it is said, an irregular outline. The total length of the rampart is 2 fursukhs, (about 8 miles), and it has a height of 12 feet (about). The space enclosed is sufficient for the whole non-combatant population with their tents, and the females of the tribe.

After due allowance for oriental exaggeration, there can be no doubt that a far more formidable work than is usually to be found in these countries, has been constructed. The depth and width of the moat seem fabulous, but, since the water of the Murghab flows through it in an unfordable stream, it must be at least a serious obstacle. The irregular outline given to the rampart, contrary to all Asiatic precedent, gives colour to a surmise that the nomads have had advice in their engineering efforts; and such may possibly be the case, though it was denied. More than two years have now elapsed since the work was commenced, and though great efforts have been made it is still incomplete. The whole of the able-bodied slaves of the tribe have been employed and many of the Turkomans themselves have aided in the work, a

circumstance commented on, as showing their determination to defend themselves. The extent of the enclosure, even if exaggerated by one-half, is, of course, too great for vigorous or united defence; but its capture will still be a formidable undertaking, for the tribe is numerous and warlike, and will, before confined to its limits, have been driven to make a desperate resistance.

The guns left by the Persian commander, the Hashmat-u-Dowla, are still at Merve, with some others, but I could not learn for certain that they had been mounted, or that there were any supplies of shot and powder. Powder is manufactured and possibly some quantity might be raised in the "obahs" and the shot left by the Persians is still available, supplemented, as I was informed, by supplies brought over from Bokhara by horsemen.

Mode of defence to be adopted.

The mode of defence determined on was detailed to me as follows:—

On the first alarm, the whole of the women, children, tents and mares, with an unlimited store of provisions, will be sent into the fortress, with all the unmounted men. The plain will be cleared of crops and laid under water.

The mounted men of the tribe, a large proportion, will advance into the desert and meet the enemy, working on his flanks and communications. Any better plan it would be difficult to devise, and against an undisciplined Persian force it would probably enough succeed, as it has done before. Their communications would certainly go, and they would lack the vigour to deal a crushing blow by the capture of the entrenchment with sufficient speed.

Settlement.

Near the fort is the principal settlement which appears to be of a permanent nature. In addition to the usual tent or "alachik," there are huts built of wood, cut higher up on the Murghab and floated down, and of reeds. In these live the merchants, the Jews, and a few handicaftsmen; saddles, guns and swords and some woollen fabrics are made in the settlement.

The Jews are chiefly of Mashad; there they are Mahomedans, in the desert they usually return to their old form of worship. Their number fluctuates with the state of security and of trade. There is now, I am informed, only one family,—that of the agent of the Mashad Jews,—in connection with the Bokhara trade.

Obahs.

Outside the settlement there are no fixed habitations, the "obahs" being scattered over the cultivated plain or pasture lands in groups of 200 to 500. With an increase of cultivation they are acquiring, in some degree, the permanence of fixed settlements or villages of tents.

Cultivation.

The cultivated land, lying on both banks of the stream, is equally divided between the two divisions of the tribe, the Otamish and Toktamish; the one holding the one side of the stream, the other the opposite bank. Large cuts from the stream irrigate the land on both banks, and enable the Turkomans to lay the whole country

for many miles under water. The soil is exceedingly fertile, two or three crops (two of green fodder and one of grain) being reaped from one sowing; the yield of wheat is commonly a hundredfold. The Turkomans admit that they are poor cultivators, and do not take the trouble to make the most of their rich soil. The ground is scratched with light ploughs drawn by camels, and the seed sown broadcast. Large quantities of wheat are raised, more than sufficient for home consumption. A considerable quantity is also taken to Khiva and to Sarraks to feed the Persian garrison. During the famine in Khorassan large quantities of grain also found their way from Sarraks to Mashad. Grain.

Barley, jowari (millet), and lucerne are grown for forage, the latter being cut and dried for winter use. Cotton is also grown and used with silk in weaving a coarse cloth used for under-clothing by all classes. Melons are grown in large quantities, and within the last two or three years gardens have been planted on the banks of the Murghab. This circumstance was specially mentioned by the Turkomans, as indicative of the change that was taking place in their mode of life, consequent on their long undisturbed possession of the fertile oasis. Gardens.

Since the destruction of Merve by the Usbegs, nearly a hundred years ago, no attempt has till lately been made to restore the old gardens and vineyards; the nomads affecting to despise all such occupations. Young trees had therefore to be brought from Charjoee, a distance of 150 miles by horsemen, during winter, when water is to be found everywhere on the steppe.

Vines and other fruit trees now bear well, and there are many plantations of mulberry for sericulture. The tribes to the west, the Akhal Tekkah, and the Goklan, have long raised their own supply of raw silk; but the people of Merve have hitherto purchased from Khiva, Deregez, or Bokhara.

A few words on the trade of Merve, as throwing some light on the condition of the people and bearing indirectly on their political relations with their neighbours, may not be out of place. Trade.

Trade of Merve by Deregez.

Exports.	Estimated value per annum.	Remarks.
	Tomans.	
Alija Bafi - -	10,000	Mixed silk and cotton goods for Turkomans.
Shal Bafi - -	20,000	Silk piece-goods for Turkomans and Bokhara.
European goods -	9,000	Chiefly sheetings, chintzes, calico, &c.
Kerman goods -	5,000	Shawls for puggris and kamarbands.
Indigo - - -	2,500	Pretty steady demand.
Sekatbar - -	—	Lead and spices, value and quantity fluctuating.
Opium - -	—	Value and quantity very fluctuating.
Exports -	46,500.	

Imports.	Estimated value per annum.	Remarks.
	Tomans.	
Raw silk - -	—	From Bokhara.
Cochineal - -	—	" "
Imperials - -	—	Russian gold coins, Bokhara.
Aghari - -	—	Fine camel-hair, cloth from Turkomans.
Saddles - -	—	From Khiva and Turkomans.
Felts - - -	—	Horse clothings and felts.
Kulaji - -	—	Rough cloth for bags of goat's hair.
Lamb-skin - -	—	
Fox-skin - -	—	

NOTE.—The quantity of raw silk imported depends upon the state of the crop in the countries Trans-Oxus. It sometimes, though very rarely, appears among the exports.

The number of caravans passing yearly is reckoned at 10 or 12, and they consist usually of 20 or 25 camels, half of which may be laden with merchandise. Carriage is often changed at Merve. At Deregez the camel loads are broken into loads for mules or asses.

Deregez is five stages; two and a half tomans = Rupees 10 per 700 lbs., is charged for the journey. Merve is six stages for camels. The Turkoman carriers charge one kran per maund = 10 tomans, Rupees 40 per Kharwar of 700 lbs.

Bokhara is ten stages for camels. Rate of hire charged is in proportion.

At Deregez $\frac{1}{40}$th = $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is the fixed rate of duty on all that passes.

At Bokhara "Margund Pooli" or payment to guards of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is taken on the frontier, $\frac{1}{20}$th from Jews, $\frac{1}{30}$th on mixed ventures. At the city gate also the same is taken.

At Meshed a gate due and octroi are taken amounting to $\frac{17}{40}$ths.

The nomad has few wants and produces little that is in demand among his neighbours; but his wide pastures enable him to rear an unlimited supply of beasts of burden, camels, pack-horses, and a few mules; and it is, therefore, as a carrier chiefly that he passes across the steppes. During the rule of the Asoph-u-Dowla in Khorassan, the Sarik Turkomans were in possession of Merve and being to a great extent under his influence, were induced to give some protection to caravans in transit through their country. The Tekkah, now the most powerful tribe on the eastern steppe, are, on the contrary, thoroughly independent, and thoroughly hostile to the Persians. Trade has, in consequence, languished, the Persians being afraid to trust themselves and their goods beyond the border, and the Turkoman carriers unable to bring their camels within reach of the rapacious Persian troops guarding the border. Such has been the state of affairs for the last ten years. The fault lies on both sides, the Turkomans annoying the Persians by constant raids, and the Persian authorities rendering a better understanding impossible by treacherous and unfair reprisals on people engaged only in trade.

During the several terms that the Government of Khorassan was held by the Hissam-u-Sultanah (uncle of the Shah), there was a dawning of better things. Tekkah chiefs were received by the prince, and arrangements made for opening the routes to caravans; but his successors pursued a different policy, and the Tekkah are

now thoroughly disgusted and hopeless. The first advances were always made by them, and seem to have been met either by impossible conditions or by treachery, the Persians punishing themselves by depriving the nomads of the small profits they might derive from transporting Persian goods across the desert. A few caravans now find their way to and from Merve by way of Deregez, a border state 5 marches N. W. of Mashad. They are taxed heavily by the Khan, but protected from other plunderers. The route is in other respects unsuited for trade, for the difficult pass of Allaho Akbar cannot be crossed by camels, and a change of carriage is necessary.

From Mashad to Merve and thence to Bokhara goods are sent chiefly by the Jews of Mashad, their consignments being safe in the hands of the Turkomans, while those of Persians might not be so. The chief articles of export to and from Merve and of the transit trade are given in the annexed "statement." (*See* foot, page 158.)

The value of exported goods is calculated roughly from the averages of several years.

The value of imports could not be ascertained, as only a portion reach Mashad, but it does not equal the exports. At Merve the Turkomans charge no transit duties, and in ordinary times, the merchants are free from exactions. The carriers, however, are always Turkomans of Merve, and the agents of the trade are in close connection with them.

The fact that this trade is carried on across the steppes, and that the caravans are safer among the Turkomans than on the border of Khorassan and Bokhara, is encouraging, as proving the complete control that public opinion has upon the members of a tribe of professional plunderers living under no constituted authority. Between Merve and Herat also caravans pass pretty freely, following the course of the Murghab.

The exports and imports are much the same as those between Merve and Khorassan.

Manufactures.

The Turkoman male is, as a rule, an entirely unproductive member of the community, occupying his time either with his horses and herds, or in distant forays.

The women and slaves manufacture almost everything that is required for domestic use. The tent or "Alachick," the lattice framework of wood cut on the river bank, and the covering of felts made of the wool of the flocks, the carpets, saddles, saddle bags, horse-trappings, vessels for churning, skin bags for milk, clothing and bedding, and in addition some articles to be bartered for such goods of foreign make as may be required. These articles are chiefly felts, much sought after in Khorassan, felt and woollen horse-clothing. *Akari*, a very fine cloth of the wool of young camels, *koork* and *koork-i-barra*, cloth of sheep and lambs' wool, trapping and saddle bags of handsome carpet work, lamb-skins and fox-skins. Every tent has its loom, and the women have the reputation of being as industrious as their lords are the reverse.

Elements of population.

The mass of the population of Merve are Turkomans of the Tekkah tribe, but there is also a considerable population of slaves,

dependants of other tribes, and waifs from all parts. The slaves are, of course, chiefly Persians, or the descendants of Persians, and at a moderate computation there is one to every tent. The dependent Turkomans are Syuds of Toork origin and fractions of the Sarik and Salor tribes, formerly in possession of the oasis lands. There are some Afghan residents, and, as before mentioned, a small fluctuating population of Jews.

The Tekkah.

The Tekkah Turkomans, according to their own tradition, come originally from the shores of the Aral and Caspian, and settled on the Labab tract on the south bank of the Oxus.

Settled in the "Atak."

Thence they were tempted by Nadir Shah, who enrolled large numbers of them in his armies, and settled the tribe in the "Atak" at the base of the Khorassan highlands. Their settlements stretched from the banks of the Heri-Rood, along the mountain and the course of the Tejen, to the edge of the Caspian desert westwards.

Drive out original inhabitants.

There were at that time Persian villages in the "Atak" at Mehna, Chachha, Chardeh, and Abivert, and Koord and Yamoot settlements, further west. So long as the master hand was felt, the new comers and their fellow subjects in the villages lived amicably enough side by side, the Tekkah at Tejen, and on the outer "Atak;" but on Nadir's death disturbances arose, and the Tekkah seized the whole country up to the base of the mountains destroying the Atak villages, and driving the Koords, Persian Toorks, and Yamoots out of the pastures of Nissa, Ishkabad, Annau, and Karez.

For more than 100 years the Tekkah remained in possession often attacked and driven out into the desert, but always returning to their pastures with indomitable pertinacity; plundered by, and plundering, the Koord mountaineers, and sweeping round their flanks to harass the defenceless villages in the plains of Khorassan.

Expulsion of the Tekkah from Eastern Atak.

Their final expulsion from the Eastern "Atak" and Tejen took place 30 years ago, and was the result of a quarrel with the Chief of Kelat, Mahomed Ali Khan, with whom they had long been in league and by whose aid they had been successfully resisted many of the attempts of the rulers of Khorassan to dislodge them. A daughter of the tribe had, contrary to custom, been taken in marriage by the chief, who refused the demand of a deputation of the tribe for her restoration. Raids in retaliation for this injury followed, and the Khan at length cordially co-operating with the Shah's troops, enabled them to occupy the Eastern "Atak."

Retire to Sarraks.

The Tekkah retired to Sarraks, which had remained unoccupied since the defeat and dispersal of the Salor tribe by Abbas Mirza. in 1837, and shortly after leagued with the "Salar" son of Asof-u-Dowla and the inhabitants of Mashad in their unfortunate rebellion, earning the vengeance of the victorious Prince Governor, Sultan Moorad Mirza.

Repulse of the Persians.

Their star was, however, in the ascendant. In 1852 the Prince Governor aided by the Sarik and Salor tribe, whose lands on the

Heri-Rood the Tekkah had occupied, marched against them, but was forced to retreat from the desert with heavy loss. They were then attacked and defeated by the Khan of Khiva, who had already occupied Merve. On the day following their defeat, an accident enabled them to obtain a partial success, which was by a bold and sudden onslaught improved into a decisive victory. The Khan was slain and his army entirely destroyed. The gratitude of the Persians, over whom the horrors of an Usbeg invasion had been impending, was unbounded, and the munificence and wise policy of the Firman Firma Prince Feridoon Mirza brought about a union of the eastern tribes, the Tekkah, Sarik, and Salor, who entered into a dependent alliance, and admitted Persian Governors into Sarraks and Merve. Feridoon Mirza died on his return from Sarraks, and was succeeded by Sultan Moorad Mirza. The ambitious designs of this Prince on Herat speedily dissolved the ill-assorted alliance. The Sarik marched with the Persians to Herat, while the Tekkah aided the Eimaks of Herat in their forays on the Persian camps and caravans. On his return after the surrender of Herat, the Prince, aided by the Sarik, attacked the Tekkah, drove them out of Sarraks and down the Murghab to Merve, which he occupied with an entrenched camp. The vanquished tribe retired into the desert, and while suffering the greatest hardship kept their enemy fully occupied.

Defeat of the Khivans.

Driven out of Sarraks.

Seize upon Merve.

The withdrawal of the Persian troops, which followed on a change of Government, left the Sarik at the mercy of their rivals, to whom they were forced to relinquish the fertile land of the oasis. They retreated to Sarraks and again sought the assistance of the Persians.

The Prince Hamza Mirza Hushmat-u-Dowla had succeeded his brother Sultan Murad Mirza in the government. He bears the reputation of a brave and popular, though most unfortunate leader. In an evil hour he determined to make a final effort to right the allies of Persia, whose misfortunes were not unfairly laid at his door. Collecting an army of 30,000 men, with 30 guns and a large body of Turkoman auxiliaries he advanced in the spring of 1860 against Merve. The Tekkah retreated before him, allowing him to occupy the oasis, and detaining him there with desultory attacks and futile negotiations. The whole fighting force of the tribe, including the contingents of the most distant "obahs" of the Akhal having been collected, the opportunity of a distant foray of the Persian force was seized upon to make a general attack. The entrenched camp of the Persians and the force out on the plain were simultaneously surrounded by clouds of horsemen. A few embankments cut laid the intervening country under water, effectually disabling the Persian artillery. The attack, aided by nightfall was pressed close, a panic ensued, and the ill-disciplined infantry, breaking their ranks, fled for the distant camp. The whole of the guns, arms, and 20,000 prisoners, fell into the hands of the Tekkah. The Prince, with the broken remnants of his army, negotiated a retreat; and his Turkoman allies, turning their backs in despair

Defeat of Hamza Mirza.

on their fertile lands, scattered along the banks of the Murghab northwards to the border of Herat, their numbers greatly diminished and their tribal unity destroyed. Serruks was occupied by the Persians, who have held it ever since, avoiding hostilities and keeping clear of alliances with their neighbours of the desert.

Western sections return to Akhal.

Having got rid of their Persian invaders and completely dispossessed the former occupants, the Tekkah sections of the Eastern "Atak" settled down on the oasis lands, the Akhal contingents returning to the Western Atak laden with booty and prisoners.

From that time the distinctive appellations of Merve Tekkah and Akhal Tekkah—the latter from a wide pasture of that name in the Western "Atak"—appear to have been applied to the two divisions by the people of Khorassan, and they have come to be regarded as to some extent distinct tribes.

A very close connection has, however, been maintained, any movement of a portion of the tribe being speedily telegraphed along the whole line.

Nature of connection between the two branches of the tribe.

The Tekkah of Akhal look up to those of Merve as the superior tribe, superior in wealth and power, as in fact the main body, of which they are only a branch. They admit their liability to aid in the defence of Merve with their whole forces, but do not appear to demand entire reciprocity, or to anticipate more than a limited amount of aid, in the event of attack from the west. They form an outpost, which will retire on the main body when pressed, or join it when summoned. To take a recent instance, on the three occasions that they have met the Russians, they do not appear to have expected, and certainly did not receive, help from their brethren of Merve.

In the relations of the Mervees also with Afghanistan, Persia, and also with Bokhara, they have little more than an indirect interest; their front is to the west, towards Asterabad and the Caspian.

Separate political connections.

Hence, though an integral portion of the Tekkah tribe, and united by the closest bonds, the Akhal branch is to such an extent, geographically and politically, separated from the main body, that its present condition and future prospects will be better viewed, in connection with the tribes of the western steppes.

In viewing separately the politics of the Akhal, it will be necessary simply to bear in mind that their connection with Merve may afford them an asylum in the event of defeat and a slight accession of strength; and in viewing separately the politics of Merve, that the Akhal branch is a party to all its negotiations in peace and a certain support to the full extent of its number in time of war.

The two in fact, while allied by kindred interest, have distinct political connections, which cannot well be viewed from the same stand-point.

Tekkah of Merve.

Unlike the other branches of his race the Tekkah of Merve remains winter and summer on the same ground.

Changes of habits.

The possession of the fertile oasis land has already effected a change in his habits. The winter and summer moves, habitual

to the Turkish nomad, and often persisted in when apparently there is no advantage either of climate or pasturage offered by the change, have been abandoned. His camp is moved simply with reference to necessities of agriculture. The "obah" is pitched in the centre of the cultivated land, and is moved only within a circuit of a few miles. The herds and flocks being sent out in charge of slaves to graze in the belt of pasture land separating the cultivated plain from the desert. Much more use is also made of artificial grasses than formerly. Green barley, jowari and lucerne (lately introduced) are largely cultivated for fodder, being presumably necessary to supplement the insufficient pasturage. The labour of cultivation appears to be left to a great extent to slaves, but as much more grain is produced than suffices for the consumption of the population, and the number of male slaves is limited to about one to each family, or less, it may be presumed in spite of denials that the nomad has at last put his hand to the plough, and has riveted another link in the chain that is to bind him to a more settled mode of life. The only occupations for his time that the Turkoman will readily own to are the rearing and training of horses, a general supervision over his herds of camels and his flocks, trade, and plunder; and these may certainly be assumed to take up the greater portion of the time of a large proportion of the tribe. Occupations.

From a distance and with very limited opportunities of intercourse with the people, it was impossible to make anything like an exact calculation of the actual numbers of the tribe, and of the proportions in which they are divided among different occupations, a matter of very great importance in relation to their political future and the prospect of their ever attaining to a separate national existence or to a social condition fitting them for incorporation with an organised and civilised community. Failing better information, a fair general idea may be gained from the following computations which are based on the best obtainable native information.

The total strength of the tribe, not including the Akhal branch, was very variously given by different individuals at from 15,000 to 30,000, and even 60,000 tents or families. Making a fair allowance for exaggeration on one hand, and detraction on the other, 25,000 may be accepted as a fair mean. The nomad having usually a large family and one or two slaves, seven, instead of five, souls per family may be accepted as a true average. This would give a population of 175,000, and a total of effective males, not slaves, of about 30,000 or something more than one to each family. Strength of tribe and occupations.

A Turkoman invariably divides his people into two great classes, viz., those who live by plunder and those who do not. Following somewhat the same plan, but eliminating more carefully the former, among the 30,000 adult males may be reckoned 1,000 strangers, merchants, Ishans, and Mollahs, 3,000 or 4,000 engaged in agriculture, 1,000 permanently engaged in the carrying trade,

15,000 in rearing and tending cattle, &c., leaving a balance of 9,000 or 10,000; having no property and no sufficient employment at home, and forming an element of the population, out of which comes little increase to the general wealth, and all the dangers that have hitherto and will; in the future, beset the community.

Division according to occupations.

This balance was, on good authority, reduced to 7,000 or 8,000, said also from various causes to be on the decrease, leaving the division of the population about as follows :—

Merchants, Priests, &c. - - -	1,000
Carriers - - - -	1,000
Agriculturists - - -	4,000
Nomads - - - -	16,000
Plunderers - - -	8,000
Total	30,000

Fighting strength.

The fighting force of the tribe comprises, as is the rule with nomadic races, nearly every adult male.

Allowing 25,000 as the available number of the Tekkah and 10,000 as the number of the dependent clans, and slaves that could be depended upon to fight, a total of 35,000 is obtained. This was declared to be far below the mark, 50,000 being claimed as the lowest computation and may therefore be accepted as near the truth.

The whole of these are, of course, armed with guns and swords, and have supplies of powder and lead sufficient for a brief campaign. The proportion of European, *i.e.*, of percussion arms is admitted to be small.

The difficulties of computing the number of mounted men that could be turned out by the tribe are increased by the tendency of the Turkomans to exaggerate on this point. There is nothing of which they are more proud than of the number of horses owned by their tribe or clan. After reducing very nearly one-half the average of numbers given me, at various times, there are left to the tribe 5,000 mares and 12,000 horses sufficient to mount perhaps 15,000 men, and this is, I believe, about the number that might be relied on.

Horses.

Ponies and pack horses are not included in the above. The fighting force available on an emergency may be reckoned therefore at

Horse - - - - -	15,000
Foot - - - - -	20,000
Total	35,000

Military qualities.

The Tekkah Turkoman footmen or "tofangchi" is much respected by the Persians, and is admitted by them to be a staunch fighter and a good shot. He is, of course, poorly armed, but

might be relied on to make a good defence behind his entrenchments, even against modern arms.

The prowess of their horsemen is greatly exaggerated, except by the tribes who know them best, the Koords of Koochan and Bujnoord.

So much has been written about them, that it would be superfluous to dilate on their qualities and method of combat. There are, however, two points worthy of note which I have not yet seen noticed. The Turkoman horseman avoids meeting an enemy face to face after the manner of cavalry of European nations, and never uses his sword from choice, save on a dismounted and defenceless enemy. He is in fact but a very serviceable mounted skirmisher, his weapon the rifle,* which has only lately replaced the bow and arrow of his Scythic progenitor.

The same remarks apply to all the Turkoman tribes of the Persian border. The Turkoman horse of whatever breed is admirably adapted to all purposes of cavalry.

The plunderers.

The 8,000 men put down above as "Plunderers," forming the dangerous class of the Merve community, are not actually a distinct band of professional robbers, but represent rather the available population, from which the "Allamans" or plundering bands may be recruited, and for whom further occupation must be found, if the community is to settle down and live at peace with its neighbours. The "Allamans" also are not permanently organised bands. There are certain recognised leaders, known to the Persians as "Duzdbashis," who head every raid but have no regular following. The leader forms his plans for a foray in secret, and calls for volunteers by planting his spear before his tent-door. His followers are informed of nothing but the time fixed for departure; for every camp has its spies, paid by the Persian border chiefs. The following list of the "Duzdbashis" or robber leaders of Merve may be of interest as showing the systematic manner in which plundering is still carried on, and pointing out the men whose removal would almost suffice to secure the peace of the community.

Duzdbashis.

Robber Leaders of Merve.

(1.) Taj Ganj, of the Seechma Tira or section also known as Taj Sardar, whose beat is towards Serruks and Herat.

(2.) Doongatir, of the Bakhshi section, who recruits chiefly among the Mujawir and Syuds, dependent sections of Turkomans not Tekkah, and bearing the worst character in the whole community. His beat is towards the Russian settlements on the right bank of the Oxus.

(3.) Kulli Ishan, of Seechma Tira. Raids in the country about Shorakhan and Khiva.

* Of native manufacture known as "Kirli" in Khorassan.

(4.) Adina Nafas, Mujawir. In the Ghaeenat and Khiva.
(5.) Ashoor, Marghun, or the hunter. Sultan Aziz, Ghaeenat and Goonabad.
(6.) Begunj Seechma. In Meshed.
(7.) Kara (black) Begunj, Boorkas.
(8.) Shickhli Sardar, Aman Shah, a very noted man, lately heard of on the Herat road in pay of Sardar Yakoob Khan.
(9.) Khajakkar Sardar, Aman Shah, also a very influential man. Raids Kelat, Deregez, and Khiva.
(10.) Adina Kurban, Bakhshi, Kelat and Khiva.
(11.) Aziz Sardar Iwaz. Two brothers of Kara Yurma section. Said to be the most noted robbers in Merve. They are successful and popular leaders and able at all times to raise 4,000 to 5,000 men for raids in any direction.

Plundering now falling into discredit.

The business of plunder, however, is said of late to have fallen into much discredit. It is reprobated by the mollahs, except when the raids are made on Russian territory, who refuse to hold intercourse with the "Allamans," as the robbers are styled, and is discouraged by the principal "Aksakals," or greybeards.

In former days the "Allaman" went forth headed by the chiefs of the tribe, and with the blessing of the "Ishans" or priests, but times would appear to have changed, and the causes of this change are to be sought for not in any great improvement in the moral tone of the community, but rather in radical alterations in the conditions under which the business must now be carried on. Robbery is evidently no longer respectable, because it is both unsafe and unprofitable. Unsafe, because it may likely enough entail invasion and subjugation, which was never before even a possible contingency; unprofitable because the closing of the slave-marts has rendered the capture of Persian villagers in large numbers a useless exertion. Though it has received a severe check, so long as there are men and horses unemployed, plundering will continue.

Honest occupations will absorb more of the young men of the tribe, but there will remain a number of reckless spirits, under no authority or control, sufficient to bring down upon the whole tribe the misfortunes already looming in the distance.

Constitution and authority.

The Tekkah of Merve are, it is scarcely necessary to say, like all tribes of Tartar origin, divided and sub-divided into clans, and sections of clans, and these again into smaller divisions. The whole tribe, including the "Akhal" branch, are divided into two clans or "Taifa" and 40 minor divisions, the names of which are given in the annexed statement. The "Akhal" branch consists of fractions from nearly all the "Tira" or sections of the tribe.

The two clans are so far distinct that they hold opposite banks of the rivers, but the sections or sub-divisions are completely amalgamated, an "obah" or group of tents having often representatives of several "Tira."

DIVISIONS OF TEKKAH TRIBE OF TURKOMANS.

Clan (Taifa).	Section (Tira).	Sub-divisions.	Aksakal.	Remarks.
Otamish	1. Bakhshi	1. Jaltak 2. Mirash. 3. Basman. 4. Salaf. 5. Ak Tash Ayak 6. Kara Tash Ayak	Kutogh Bai. Said Beg.	
	2. Sijmas	1. Ak Sofi 2. Haj Sofi Arab 3. Kyzil Kuz 4. Malik Aman. 5. Baghcha. 6. Arko. 7. Saree. 8. Ferrang.	1. Taj Khan 2. Mohamad Raheem. 3. Mulla Iran.	Accompanied Yakoob Khan to Cabul in 1868.
	3. KaraAhmed		Verdi Nyaz Khan	In pay of Amir of Bokhara.
	4. Bulghoz		Khwaja Nefes	An influential man.
	5. Sultan Aziz		Asoor Lung.	
	6. Mujawir Sheikh.		Davees Bai.	
	7. Salor		Verdi Murad Khan.	
	8. Topal		Hakim.	
	9. Khwaja		Moosa.	
	10. Atta		Agha Ali Murad.	
Toktomash	1. Beg	1. Aman Shah 2. Kongor 3. Gokcha	Mulla Sadiq. Odagh Qumsik. Koushid Khan	Known as Chief or Governor of Merve.
	2. Wakeel	1. Yusuf (1. Talak 2. Kara Burma.) 2. Bokri 3. Kashil. 4. Kunjak.	Nur Verdi Khan Alla Nazza.	Acknowledged Chief of the Akhal Branch of Tekkah. Has tent and wives also at Merve.
	3. Khar		Kara Shaitan	In pay of Amir of Bokhara.
	4. Kara		Daood Mirab.	
	5. Yazi		Verdi Pehlwan.	
	6. Arak		Aman Nuzzar.	
	7. Kardja		Oraz Murad Khan	Influential Chief of Akhal. Head of obah of 1,000 tents.
	8. Harin		Aman Verdi.	
	9. Khatil		Omar.	

NOTE.—The names of the principal Akhals only are given.
Some, as Nur Verdi Khan and Oraz Mohamad Khan, have tents and property in both Akhal and Merve.
The following are some men of note in Merve, the names of whose clans I was unable to ascertain:—
Mohamad Durdy Khan.
Malik Bai.
Adna Geldy Khan, now at Khiva.

Each section has an Aksakal or greybeard, a chief attaining his position neither by election, nor by hereditary right, but by the tacit admission of his claim in virtue of age, experience, and personal influence. The position brings no gain, and appears to be respected only in the person of the incumbent. It is never contested and confers no authority. Aksakals

The conciliation of these chiefs would, of course, be the first step taken in dealing with the tribes, but it would then be necessary to win over almost every individual member, for each has his opinion and a voice in the discussion of public matters.

A far greater power than the Aksakal is the Ishan* or Mollah; his authority is also, though to a less extent, dependent on personal

* Ishans.

influence. At present there are none of note among the Tekkahs of Merve, but the meanest has great power.

Kousheed Khan.

Not the least important of the recent changes in the condition of the community, induced probably by the course of recent events in the neighbouring countries, has been the local election of a leader or chief Aksakal, one Kousheed Khan of the Gokcha section, a man of great influence, but not otherwise seemingly of much note. His position is entirely without precedent, and the instructive acknowledgment of the necessity of some form of authority, by a mass of lawless nomads, swayed almost solely by their own impulses, is remarkable, and of itself proves the existence of a power capable of exercising a wide influence over the fortunes of the community, a counterpart, in fact, of "public opinion" as known in more civilised countries.

It is this public or general opinion, expressing the necessity for united action in the face of grave danger, that has, no doubt, led to the tacit acknowledgment of the authority of a single chief, and to unusual and energetic action under his direction, in the work of public defence.

The powers vested in Kousheed Khan are, as might be expected, undefined, and he has no title among his own people, being simply spoken of by name.

Without authority to impose a tax or to punish, he has been able, nevertheless, for two years to keep the tribe at work on their fortifications, a labour utterly distasteful to them, and contrary to the customs of a people who have no faith in walls, being taught by tradition and habit to trust in battle only to the speed of their horses; he has also negotiated with Bokhara and Khiva, with Afghanistan, and probably also with Russia and in the name of the tribe; his power to do so being admitted by even the most distant sections of the "Akhal."

The election of a chief with even the limited power over the internal affairs of the tribe vested in Kousheed Khan, would prove of immense advantage in any negotiations that might be opened with the tribe, for he would serve as a reliable medium of communication; and there can be little doubt that any engagements he might make in the name of the community would be fully ratified.

Relations of Tekkah with Persia.

After the defeat of the Shah's army under the Hashmat-u-Dowla, related above, and the final occupation of Merve by the Tekkah, there was for a long period no attempt at intercourse between Khorassan and Merve. The Persians remained in possession of Sarraks where they fortified themselves, and though unable to occupy the pastures of the Tejen, prevented their being made a base for their plundering expeditions by the Tekkah, and by the Sarik and Salor, who, finding themselves again deserted by the Persians, had come to terms and were in league with their kinsmen.

Sarraks fortified.

Direct trade with Bokhara was at a stand-still. The Turkomans could not venture their property on Persian soil, but they indemnified themselves for the slight loss thus sustained by con-

stant raids across the Heri-Rood, plundering the country up to the walls of Mashad, and south as far as the borders of Seistan, and sweeping off the population of entire districts into slavery. This was, of course, no new phase in the history of the unfortunate peasantry of Khorassan, but the evils they had formerly suffered were intensified by the concentration of the efforts of their enemies on the work of pillage.

Hissam-u-Sultana.

In 1869 the Government of Khorassan again fell into the hands of the Hissam-u-Sultana, Sultan Murad Mirza. This Prince is popular with the Turkomans, being both respected and feared by them.

His policy.

He alone of all Persian statesmen appears to have accurately appreciated the full importance to Persia of Russia's movements on the Aral and Caspian, and to have gauged truly the value of the opportunities of extending her influence and consolidating her northern border, opposed to her thereby, and the dangers of apathy and neglect in face of the insidious advances of her northern neighbour.

It was clearly the policy of Persia at the time that the Russian preparations for the occupation of Khiva were disturbing the tranquillity of the whole of the Khivan steppes and of Khorassan, to take advantage of the position she commanded as a neutral, to secure, if possible by gentle measures, the allegiance of the independent tribes on her border.

The Hissam-u-Sultana's efforts in this direction were honest and well devised, but failed, through the force of adverse circumstances. His tenure of office was too short, and he lacked the cordial support of the Shah's Ministers. The feebleness of his predecessors had so emboldened the plundering tribes that it needed not only vigorous measures but a long continuance of them to restore tranquillity. At the time of his arrival the Tekkah and Salor were ravaging the villages, within sight of the walls of Mashad, and the whole country south was parcelled out between the various bands of raiders, which remained in almost permanent possession. During his two years' tenure of office he was successful in opening friendly communications with the Tekkah chiefs, and in securing the free passage of caravans for a short time. The old villages of Mehna, Mapak, Chardeh, Doshakh, Afardeh, Tirmachi, and Gulingan in the Kelat Atak were re-occupied for the most part by Tekkah emigrants, who paid one-tenth of the produce to the Persian Government, and became liable to military service, thus effectually strengthening the border and forming a screen to the Kelat villages in their rear. The re-occupation of the Tejen pastures by the Tekkah was also in progress. Turkoman raids in other parts however continued, and appear to have furnished the Prince's enemies with a pretext for his recall. His efforts while in power were also paralysed by the same influences, for his policy which was to put a stop to Tekkah raids by a show of force on the border, to win their chiefs by liberal gifts, and to induce a peaceful re-settlement of the Kelat "Atak"—the former seat of the Merve Tekkahs—thus

Attempts to bring back the Tekkah to Tejen and the Atak.

Recall of the Hissam-u-Sultana.

creating a bond of friendship, based on solid benefits conferred and cemented by a community of interests, that might lead to the pacification of the whole tribe, under the influence of Persia, depended entirely on a free command of money and troops, both of which were withheld.

Change of policy.

With the recall of the Prince vanished Persia's best, if not her last chance of securing the tribes on her border, and again obtaining possession of Merve. Two years have been wasted, and the good work of two previous years has been more than undone, for if the Turkomans are not as they were in actual possession of the border, the reason is only to be looked for in the threatening aspect of their own affairs, which occupy their attention and their energies.

Turkoman colonies plundered.

His successor had scarcely assumed the reins of Government when the new Turkoman communities of the "Atak" were plundered and driven out by the Khan of Deregez, one of those border chiefs who are opposed by tradition, and by the strongest motives of self-interest, to any policy of pacification. He, of course, saw his opportunity in the change of policy that was sure to ensue on a change of Government under such circumstances.

Turkoman caravan plundered.

In the following spring* a large caravan from Merve with Persian goods carried by Tekkah camels was plundered by the orders of the new Governor at a village a few miles only from Mashad. This, of course, effectually extinguished the reviving trade with Bokhara, and increased the feelings of hostility of the Tekkah, giving them fresh proofs of Persian treachery and an increased contempt for the weakness of their Government.

Ineffectual re-occupation of Atak.

The late Governor of Khorassan would point perhaps to the re-occupation of the Kelat "Atak" as an administrative success, and he has no doubt succeeded in introducing and maintaining, by great efforts, a mixed population of Khorassan is at some few points, but his measures have nevertheless altogether missed the real aim of his predecessor's wise policy, which was to bring about a return of the Tekkah to their old seats in the "Atok" and Tejen, and thus to pave the way to the annexation of the Merve lands.

Of the probable success of such measures, in spite of traditional hatred and differences of religion, the present state of Persian relations with the Yamoot is tolerably good evidence, and in any event the attempt should have been made and persevered in, for it is the only chance left to Persia of maintaining the integrity of her northern border.

Proposal to coerce the Tekkah.

The proposal to use force in bringing the Akhal, and subsequently the Merve Tekkah, into subjection, reported to have been made by the late Governor of Khorassan, has apparently met with no response from the Shah's Ministers; and it is fortunate that it is so, for any such project would very probably terminate in military disaster, and would, in the opinion of the most competent judges, certainly fail in bringing the tribes into subjection.

To the course of recent events alone is to be attributed the

* March 1873.

present close and friendly relations subsisting between the Tekkah chiefs of Merve and the Afghans. Relations with Afghanistan.

When the former had their base and their markets beyond the Oxus, the Afghan borderers suffered almost equally with the Persians from their ravages, and Afghan forces joined with Persian in retaliation. The Turkoman then saw nothing to be gained from Afghan friendship, and as a liegeman of the Amir of Bokhara was often impelled to unite his duty with his interest in espousing his cause in his quarrels with the ruler of Afghanistan. Now, it is the ruler of Bokhara who is regarded by him as an enemy, in league with, or at the feet of the "unbeliever," while to the Afghan he looks for aid and offers his allegiance. Friendly. Result of recent events.

Before the year 1867 the Tekkah had been in communication only with Sirdar Yakoob Khan, the Governor of Herat. In that year Taj Sirdar of the Sijmas section of Merve Tekkah accompanied the Sirdar with a body of 300 or 400 horse to Girishk, Candahar, and Cabul, where he was entertained and handsomely rewarded by the Amir Shere Ali Khan. He returned with Yakoob Khan to Herat, and remained in close communication with him, if not, as was rumoured, in his pay. The Amir's liberality, however, was not thrown away; for Taj Khan is said to be still secretly devoted to him. With Taj Khan was one Twair Khan, an Aksakal and robber-leader of the Sarik tribe, who is in the pay of the Sirdar, and was credited with sufficient influence to bring a large body of his tribe into the field. Taj Sirdar. Twair Khan.

The influence of these two men is, however, comparatively limited, and would scarcely have merited mention, but that they were instrumental, to some extent, in bringing about the present relations. By their aid Yakoob Khan was able to save his subjects to a great extent from the incursions of the Turkomans. The village populations enjoyed an almost complete immunity, and the Eimak nomads had to complain only of occasional losses of cattle. Raids on Herat stopped.

About this time also the Sirdar entered into communication with Kousheed Khan, and received promises of aid, in the event of a breach with his father, which it was even then believed would not be rendered.

In March 1873 Kousheed Khan sent a deputation to the Sirdar asking for aid to resist a threatened attack of the Russians, proposing to immigrate in case of defeat to Herat, and suggesting the Badgees tract on the upper Murghab, formerly held by the Hazara Eimaks. Deputation to Herat asking asylum.

An asylum was promised, and the request for aid referred to Cabul but the storm had, meantime, passed over.

Previous to this as early, I am informed, as 1869, Baba Khan, son of Kousheed Khan, had been sent to the Amir to offer the allegiance of the Tekkah, on condition of aid in the event of invasion, and a guarantee of the tenure of the oasis lands. Baba Khan and some others, it is said, accompanied the Amir to India, and afterwards returned to Merve, with full assurances that the Amir would, on condition of their aiding him, when called upon, Deputation to Amir in 1869. Said to have accompanied him to India.

and respecting his territories, give them material aid in the event of their being attacked. If this tale be true, it accounts for very much, that is, otherwise, unaccountable, their firm belief in the sincerity of the Afghan alliance, in the complete dependence of Afghanistan on England, and her consequent ability to give them effectual aid. These are impressions that might easily have been taken back to Merve in 1869, but are not otherwise easy to trace to their origin.

Another deputation.

In the autumn of 1873 Baba Khan was again sent to Yakoob Khan, and thence to Cabul, with, it is stated, letters to the Amir, again offering their allegiance, and asking for assistance in arms, &c. The reply to this was, that arms would be given as soon as the need for them became apparent. This was regarded by the Tekkah as an evasion, and other messages were sent, the result of which did not become known. In September last Kousheed Khan again sent his son to Cabul with letters, informing the Amir that the Russians were preparing to attack Merve from the Oxus and the Caspian, and asking for aid. Baba Khan was at Herat at the time of my departure from Mashad awaiting a reply. The threatened attack on Merve from the Oxus, about which there was some talk among the Turkomans, having passed off, it is probable that no direct answer will be given. The result of these negotiations, whatever may have been the real nature of the assurances given by the Amir to the applications made to him, has been to inspire the Tekkah of all classes from Merve to Kyzil Arvat with a confidence that they will find the Afghans ready to aid them if they should be attacked by Russia, and if this should be impossible, at least to give them a secure asylum, in which they will be safe under the shadow of a great protecting power from further molestations. Of the existence of this feeling I received such repeated proofs that I believe it to be a very general one, and as such likely to influence the tribe in their dealings with their neighbours both in Persia and on the Oxus; for so long as they rely upon finding an asylum in their rear, they will be more apt to provoke, and more ready to resist, than might otherwise be the case.

Deputation in September 1874.

Result of these negotiations.

Reasons for desiring Afghan alliance.

The reasons underlying the evident desire of the Tekkah for an Afghan alliance have been touched upon above. There is, in fact, no other quarter to which they can look at all hopefully. Khiva and Bokhara are in the hands of the Russians, whom they have every reason to fear, and for Persia they have only feelings of dislike and contempt. The Afghans, too, are their co-religionists, and this is, under the circumstances, of some value, as smoothing the way to friendly intercourse. There is also a very general impression abroad that an alliance with Afghanistan means an alliance with England. The Turkomans especially believe that England intends, and is able under all circumstances, to maintain the integrity of Afghanistan, and hope; by an alliance with the latter power, to come under the protecting arm.

Feelings towards England.

It may appear strange that a tribe, with whom we have never had direct connection, and have had no intercourse for more than

30 years, should entertain so firm a belief in our power, when it is, certainly, to some extent, doubted in the neighbouring country; but such is the case. We are credited also with many of the qualities they most admire. English generosity is everywhere among them extolled, and the nation bears also a high character for justice and good faith. These sentiments may, I think, be traced to the good work done by the officers of the Herat Mission, and to their lavish but judicious expenditure. It is to them, therefore, that we owe, at the present day, the suffrages of a large majority of the Eastern Turkomans.

Effects of Herat Mission.

It may or may not be true, as noted above, that a deputation was sent to India, but of the desire of the Tekkah for a direct connection with us, or an indirect one through Afghanistan, I received abundant proof, and I believe that they might be transformed into a peaceable, honest, and prosperous community, and would prove a source of real strength to the border and to the empire.

Possibility of an advantageous settlement of the Merve question.

In face of the commonly accepted notions of Turkoman character, this view may appear wholly chimerical. A few words further of explanation are therefore necessary, and will, I trust, be deemed warranted by the importance of the subject.

The stragetical value of the position of Merve requires no demonstration, and its political importance becomes as evident, when the question is viewed from the spot.

Merve. Political value of position.

The Murghab River rising in the mountains of Afghanistan, flows north into the desert of Khiva, and reaching not more than half-way across it buries its water in the sandy waste.

Connection with Afghanistan.

Along its banks live a succession of nomadic tribes, commencing with the Eimaks of Herat and followed by the Sarik and Salor Turkomans, forming an unbroken chain, connecting the oasis of Merve with the heart of Afghanistan. East, west, and north of the line fertilised by the river, extends a waterless desert, forming a natural boundary between Khorassan, of which Merve and the Murghab may be considered merely a salient angle, and the tracts comprising the Usbeg Khanates. The occupation of Merve by a power, starting from these Khanates as a base, would be an infringement of this natural boundary.

Natural boundary.

A glance at a map, of course, makes this fact evident, but it acquires real political import when it is found that the boundary is recognised and felt by the people of Khorassan and the neighbouring tracts, to be not only a geographical fact, but also a traditional and actual dividing line, across which the sinister influences of a power, however restless and aggressive, could not be effectively exercised.

Political importance of boundary.

It is scarcely too much to say that the attention of all classes is riveted on Merve, and no opinion is more freely expressed than that its occupation by the Russians will be their first step into Khorassan, for their movements on the Caspian are regarded as merely subsidiary to this main end.

That a Russian invasion of Merve is, if not imminent, certainly a matter of a short time, more or less, is, I think, shown by the

Danger of foreign occupation.

state of their relations with the tribe; and after allowing full weight to all arguments based on the apparent and to some extent real isolation of the position, its small value as a possession, as being likely to be a source of weakness rather than of strength to a power having designs on Afghanistan, and the impracticable nature of its people, there remains the broad fact that its occupation by an aggressive power will shake the confidence of all classes and open the way to further extensions of influence, on what has always been the weak side of Afghanistan, the side of Herat.

Augmented by character of population.

Moreover, if the character of the population of Northern Khorassan and of Herat be taken into account, the importance of the question becomes greatly enhanced.

The Turkomans and the Eimaks of Herat and Persia are born mercenaries. Their views on politics are coloured by no tinge of patriotism; they hold themselves merely for the highest bidder, and they regard the approaching contact of the two great rival powers, which they believe to be inevitable, with a feeling akin to curiosity. (The Tekkah of Merve have exceptional cause of anxiety and of apprehension from one of the powers.) Whatever happens, they feel sure that they themselves will come well out of it, for they have nothing to lose, and their aid will be valued by either party.

At present, it may, I think, be accepted, their prepossession is in favour of the nation whose gold they have already seen, and whose prestige still stands high amongst them; but this advantage cannot be expected to stand the test of actual contact with a powerful rival. It is, in fact, still a case of "first come first "served;" the power that is first on the field will gather to herself all the free swords of the border.

Summary.

The dangers of an occupation by an aggressive power of the Merve may, therefore, be summarised thus:—

1st.—Public confidence and the tranquillity of Khorassan and Herat will be disturbed by the infringement of what is regarded as the natural and only safe boundary between those tracts and the "Khanates."

2nd.—A way will be opened for intrigue and the extension of foreign influence into the heart of Afghanistan.

3rd.—All the mercenary tribes of the frontier will come within an influence that cannot fail to attract and corrupt them.

These are the main political considerations; there are also others touching the strategical and material value of the position, and the danger to our prestige generally of its hostile occupation, of almost equal weight.

Question of the possibility of a satisfactory settlement.

The main question, from which I have somewhat diverged, regarding the practicability of any permanent or satisfactory settlement of, or connection with, a community so constituted as that of Merve, is one that will, I fear, almost instinctively be answered by a negative. It is no doubt beset with difficulties, and its solution depends primarily on the state of our relations with Afghanistan, and the nature of our engagements with Russia,

but there are certain lights thrown upon the subject on the spot that are worthy of attention, and may make it appear in a somewhat different aspect.

In the first place the character of the Turkoman nomad appears to me to be incorrectly appreciated. He is not by any means the mere plundering savage that his Persian neighbour paints him. From what I have seen and heard, I would describe the average Turkoman as exceedingly intelligent, shrewd and alive to his own interests. Moved by impulse no doubt, but not to the extent that would make him oblivious of his interests, he is also fairly well informed and a great politician.* Accustomed from childhood to a free roving life, anything like restraint would be at first irksome to him, but he does not appear to be incapable of discipline. The Turkoman of Merve is also fully alive to the advantages he now enjoys in the possession of one of the most fertile tracts in the world, and a guarantee of its undisturbed possession would be the strongest inducement that could be held out to him. He is already in some degree, as shown, changing his habits, and there is every indication, I think, of the possibility of his settling down in course of time, of his own impulse, to peaceful occupations. Two large sections of the race, the Arsari and the Goklan, have already done so, and the character of the Tekkah cannot be radically different. Character of Turkoman.

The main practical difficulties that present themselves in the way of dealing with such a community are, that a large fraction of it is without sufficient occupation and wedded to a life of plunder, and that there is apparently no constituted authority capable of representing the whole body.

The first is, however, a difficulty that diminishes daily with the extension of agriculture, and the increase of difficulties in the way of successful brigandage. If suitable employment were found for the more restless spirits, the authority of the heads of the tribe, which is all in favour of order, would probably at once accomplish the rest.

The second is, I think, met by the investiture of Kousheed Khan with power to negotiate, and to enter into engagements in the name of the tribe.

Any further discussion of the means by which a permanent connection with a tribe so distant, depending as the question does so much on our relations with other powers, would, I fear, be deemed superfluous, and it will suffice to express my opinion that, as viewed from the spot, there is nothing at all impracticable in the idea of a Tekkah alliance with Afghanistan, their country being annexed as an integral portion of that kingdom and sharing its immunities. It is desired by the Tekkah, who declare their willingness to receive Afghan or English officers among them, and a few years of undisturbed peace might prepare them for the burdens of connexion with an organised form of Government, and

* By which I mean that he takes an extraordinarily intelligent interest in the politics of the countries around his desert, and may be accepted to be a good judge of the character and intentions of the leading powers.

(Signed) G. C. Napier.

the Afghans can have no objection. In the country itself where such a settlement of the great pending question of the day is considered not only a possible, but a probable event, the practical difficulties are not regarded as even difficult to overcome.

Relations with Russia.

Aid given to Bokhara.

The Tekkah appear to have come first into contact with Russia on the frontiers of Bokhara. A large body of the tribe, numbering 6,000 or 7,000, headed by Kousheed Khan, Kara Shaitan, and other chiefs, joined the army of the Ameer of Bokhara, just too late, it is said, to take part in the campaign that concluded with the battle of Jizzak in 1867. Their connection with this affair is believed by the tribe to have marked them out for the special vengeance of Russia, who is still awaiting her opportunity to retaliate: Since their return from Bokhara, they have carefully abstained, as a tribe, from further hostilities, the petty attacks and plunderings of which the Russians have since had to complain having been carried on against the advice of the more respectable and prudent members of the community, who are, however, powerless, when the summons of the robber leaders is backed by priestly sanction.

Capture of Russian caravan.

Russian prisoner at Merve.

Last year a caravan proceeding (according to the Russian papers) from Khala-Ata to Petro Alexandrovsk* was attacked and plundered by a large body of Tekkah, and a Russian soldier carried off captive to Merve, where he is still detained for ransom. Some attempts were made by the Persians to procure his release, but for reasons which it is not difficult to surmise, the matter was allowed to drop. That the Governor of Khorassan had made an offer to ransom the prisoner, I ascertained beyond a doubt from Turkomans, but the sum named was not accepted, and the attempt was not renewed. Had the Persian Government been in earnest in the matter, there can be no doubt that the Turkomans might have been brought to terms, for there were at that time no less than 40 Turkoman prisoners at Mashad, and others at Kelat Nadiri, and Koochan. For some time, also, the chief of Merve was in communication with Ivanoff, the Russian Commander in the Amoo Darya district, but refused to surrender the prisoner as demanded without the payment of a ransom: a threat of hostilities was met by defiance. Such a termination of the negotiation was probably foreseen, and perhaps intended. It seems more than probable that the sudden relinquishment of the Persian attempts to obtain the prisoner's release, for which no sufficient explanation was ever given to me, was not unconnected with the result of the simultaneous negotiation on the Russian side. The fact of a Russian subject being held captive at Merve within a few days' march of a large Russian force on the Amoo, is of course well known throughout Khorassan, and is the subject of much discussion; aggressive motives are, of course, freely attributed to the Russian Commander, and there is certainly much to justify suspicion—for, as was said with much force, if the principle of ransom only was objected to, there had been many opportunities of reprisals on Turkoman caravans, and on Turkomans passing between Khiva,

Failure of negotiations for release.

Opinion in Khorassan.

* Petro-Alexandrofsk. On the Oxus at Shurakan Khala-Ata. E. long. 63° N. long. 42° 52′ 52″.

Bokhara and Merve. Possibly there were no such opportunities, or there were objections to interfering with trade, and the suspicions aroused are groundless and unjust; but the fact remains that such opinions are held, and that the people of Khorassan believe that the final blow is already impending, and that the days of Tekkah liberty are numbered. This is in itself calculated to exercise a disturbing influence in and beyond the limits of Khorassan, and the captive's existence remains a temptation and almost a justification to the world at large of aggression. The Turkomans themselves do not apprehend any immediate danger, the occupation of Charjoee will be their signal, and they hope, before that can be effected, to have secured an asylum, if not an alliance with Afghanistan. According to the last news I received before leaving the border, Colonel Ivanoff had renewed negotiations regarding the prisoner and two of the Tekkah Aksakals, Adna Geldy Khan and Walad Khan, are at his head-quarters. The result of this will probably be the release of the prisoner. If so, here will be good reason to believe that a change has been effected in the views of the Russian frontier administration, and that the policy of forebearance and conciliation, which is now being pursued by Russia in her dealings with the Yemoots and other tribes in the west, is to be applied to the case of Merve also. A similar policy was seen by the Hissam-u-Sultana, as above noted, to be the most advantageous one for Persia to pursue, and there can be no doubt that if left free from outward disturbing influences, it will in course of time lead to the subjugation of the Merve Tekkah, and their incorporation in the irregular legions of Russia. The presence of a Russian prisoner at Merve will in any case prove useful, as a justification in case of war, or a pretext, if other measures should be determined on. The Tekkah whom I met were, I found, fully aware that their fate was under consideration in Russia, and the words they spoke to me had probably been frequently repeated to the Russian officers on their frontier. "If the Russians attack us at once," they said, "they will find even the women of the tribe in arms, "and all prepared to make a desperate resistance. If they wait a "year or two, and take Akhal and Charjoee, and spend money "amongst us, God only knows what may be the result," which was equivalent to an admission that (in the latter case) their conquest was certain.

Renewed negotiations.

Apparent change of policy.

The true causes of the evident dislike and dread of Russia, exhibited by the Tekkah, are not easy to discover. It might almost be expected that a tribe of professional soldiers would not regard the approach of a military power likely to appreciate properly their value, and to give them the kind of employment they most approve, with any special disfavour. When questioned, they say that the Russians are "Kafirs," unbelievers; but almost in the same breath they express a desire to become subjects of a power open to precisely the same objection. The causes of their preference for England are given elsewhere. Their hostility to Russia would appear to be to a certain extent traditional, and due

Causes of Tekkah hostility towards Russia.

to their connection with Khiva and Bokhara, and to some extent also the result of guilty apprehensions of punishment for late injuries inflicted. Neither of these feelings should offer any insuperable obstacles to pacification.

Whatever course may be pursued, some time must elapse before the final and complete occupation of the oasis can be accomplished. The undertaking appears one of far greater magnitude than the recent capture of Khiva. The physical difficulties to be overcome are not perhaps of equal magnitude, but the resistance, if the attack should be made before the strength of the hostile feelings that now exist has been sapped, will be of a very different nature.

Relations with the Khanates.

Since the subjection of Bokhara to Russian domination, the Tekkah appear to have lost all respect for their suzerain, the Amir, and declare that they would no longer obey his summons to war. Two "Aksakals," Kara Shaitan and Verdi Niaz Khan, are still in his pay, but their influence with the tribe is small; they are probably retained to enable the paramount power to obtain accurate information of the movements and sentiments of the tribe. The connection of Khiva is chiefly with the Akhal branch. The people of Merve gave no assistance to the Khan during the late invasions, and it is only by their plunderings in the Khivan territories subject to Russia, that they can become connected with the politics of that state. The case of the Akhal is different. They have had direct dealings with Khiva, assisted her in her troubles, and are liegemen of the Khan, and on the same ground or pretext have been brought directly within the sphere of Russian diplomacy.

No. 5.

Reports on Events in Herat and Turkistan.

Diary for March 1875.

Afghanistan.

The following details regarding recent events in Herat were received here at different times during the month. In order to connect them with the movements in Cabul, I note the dates given in Cabul Diaries of November, December, and January :—

8th November.—Sirdar Yakoob Khan imprisoned.

9th November.—Shahghassee Sherdil Khan and Mir Akhor Ahmad Khan were sent to Herat.

24th November.—Mustowfee Hubeeboolla sent to Herat to appoint a Governor, and bring Ayoob Khan and adherents to Cabul.

24th November.—About this time Nazir Hikmat Khan, meeting the Shahghassee on the Hazara route, sends notice to Ayoob Khan of his brother's imprisonment.

25th November.—First symptom of disaffection given about this date by flight of Mohamad Hassan Khan, Barakzai, Governor of Subzwar and Anardara.

7th December.—Mustowfee's troops under Daood Shah—nine regiments infantry, four cavalry, three batteries—to concentrate at Mukar, 40 stages from Herat, about this date.

7th December.—About this date Shahghassee Sherdil sent prisoner to Kohsan, and raid made from Herat on Furrah.

11th *January.*—Cabul force of 14 regiments infantry, five of cavalry, five batteries of artillery, at Giriskh, 24 marches from Herat.

Translation.

Extracts from private letters from Mashad.

15th March.—"After the arrival of the Jubar-Kheyl chiefs, Usmutoolla and Arsoolla, the Sirdar left Herat for Cabul, with 150 sowars, and accompanied by Abdul Zahir Khan, his son Din Mohamad Khan, Mir Murtza Shah, Mutwulli of the shrine of Hazrut Abdoolla Ansari, to whose son the Amir's daughter is betrothed, and Yar Gool Khan, brother of General Faqueer Ahmad, by the Hazara route. Ayoob Khan was left in charge of Herat, and instructed by his brother to fight if any accident should befall him at Cabul, and if defeated to fly to Persia, where he would find hospitality.

"On arrival at Cabul, quarters were assigned the Sirdar in a garden, apparently under surveillance; next day he was permitted an interview with his mother; on the third day he was received by his father. He presented himself with a naked sword and a Koran hung round his neck. The interview was a stormy one,—the Amir receiving his son's excuses with torrents of abuse, and finally ordering him to be taken off to prison by the Commander-in-Chief, Hossein Khan. His parting words before the assembly were the following: 'Know that I am a man who have to deal with nations,—on one side I have my friends the English, on the other my enemies the Russians and Persians. In the eyes of these nations you have disgraced me.'"

When news of the Sirdar's imprisonment reached Herat, Ayoob made preparations for resistance, and for the defence of Herat, six regiments under Faqueer Ahmad were sent to camp near the Pul-i-Malan, the bridge over the Heri Rood, two fursakhs (8 miles) from Herat. Ayoob Khan remained in the citadel, and his General (Faqueer Ahmad) took advantage of this separation to send off his property to Mashad, keeping his family ready for flight in the neighbourhood.

After these first overt acts of rebellion, news was received of the arrival of the Shahghassee and Mir Akhor Ahmad Khan in Herat territory. The latter, an "experienced" man, remained some stages behind the Shahghassee. Intelligence of their arrival was sent to Herat by Yar Gool Khan, Faqueer Ahmad's brother, and a warning of their intentions conveyed. On the Shahghassee's arrival at Obeh, or, by another account, at Shash Noor, six fursakhs from Herat, 300 horsemen were sent to plunder and arrest him. He was stripped, beaten and dragged with every indignity into the presence of Ayoob Khan. Thence he was taken to a prison in the town, and, after the lapse of five or six days, hurried

off to Kohsan, where it was supposed he would be safe from attempts of the Amir's partisans to release him. The Mir Akhor escaped out of the trap laid for him by a timely retreat to Furrah.

Ayoob Khan then moved out from Herat, crossed the Heri Rood, and encamped with seven regiments at a distance of ten fursakhs. He was joined by 700 or 800 Turkoman horse; but the Eimaks and their chiefs Khan Aka Jamshidi and Futtoolla Beg Firoz Kohi held aloof from him. The Turkomans are said to have been under the impression (probably conveyed to them by the rebels) that Taj Sirdar, the popular leader of "Allamans" of all the tribes of the border—Sarik and Salor as well as Tekkah —had been imprisoned. They demanded of Ayoob Khan the person of the Shahghassee as hostage for his release, and offered their services for the war. They were sent with some horsemen of Herat to attack Furrah, and finding the people unprepared, succeeded in carrying off some cattle and property. A second attempt made by them was less successful. Mir Afzul Khan, having obtained intelligence of their intentions, met them with 500 horse, and defeated them with a loss of 100 killed and wounded.

The leader of Ayoob Khan's partisans in these affairs was Sirdar Mohamad Hassan Khan, Barakzai, who appears to have been actuated solely by his personal friendship for the Sirdar, to whom he had given a pledge that he would use his utmost endeavours to obtain his release if he were imprisoned by the Amir.

Kohsan the frontier fortress in the direction of Persia, came into Ayoob's hands by the disaffection of Abdul Jaleil Khan, a staunch partisan of Yakoob Khan's. Ghorian was held for the Amir by two brothers of Din Mohamad Khan (who shared the Shahghassee's imprisonment), by name Faizo Jan and Futteh Jan. While the futile demonstrations in the direction of Furrah above noted were being made, Khan Aka Jamshidi received intelligence of the imprisonment at Kohsan of the Shahghassee, and determined to take the opportunity thus offered of showing his loyalty to the Amir. Setting out with 2,000 Jamshidi horse and foot, he arrived suddenly at Kohsan, and effected the release of the Shahghassee, whom he sent into the fortress of Ghorian. When news of this reached Ayoob Khan's camp, General Faqueer Ahmad was sent with two regiments and four guns to attack Ghorian. He was met by Khan Aka and the Shahghassee, and appears to have obtained some advantage over the Jamshidis. They were driven off, and a brother and son of the chief killed, with a few men. Ghorian was occupied by Ayoob Khan's troops.

Din Mohamad Khan, who appears to have been retained by Ayoob Khan in his camp after the transfer of the Shahghassee to Kohsan had attempted to escape to Ghorian; but was detained and put to death by one Nabi Khan Zaray, a Colonel in the Herat force, acting under the orders of Ayoob.

There was a party in the camp however favorable to the Amir's cause, and Nabi Khan was killed by one Sardaroo, a "Commadan" or Major of the Herat force, who was protected by the disaffected soldiery. Though master of Herat, Ghorian, Kohsan, and holding

nearly the whole territory, Ayoob Khan's position, without money and with disorganised troops, was almost desperate. Nothing could have saved (him) but a rising in Cabul. The troops were paid up their arrears after the Shahghassee's imprisonment, but money for the purpose was raised with difficulty. The rabi (spring) instalment of revenue collected in advance and the sum of about Rupees 24,000 was thus raised. Other small sums were borrowed from merchants in the town. In spite of these efforts, disaffection spread among the troops, and news of the march of troops from Cabul and Candahar decided the people of the town to oppose Ayoob Khan's re-entry. This, with the open mutiny of some regiments following on the murder of Din Mohamad Khan, appears to have shown Ayoob Khan that further resistance was hopeless, and he fled with a few followers to Khaff. His General Faqueer Ahmad hearing at Ghorian of the murder of Nabi Khan and the mutiny of the troops, sent his family by Kahreez to Mashad, and himself crossed the border to Khaff, where Ayoob Khan shortly arrived. Sirdar Mohamad Hassan Khan also fled from Furrah and joined Ayoob Khan at Khaff, and the party was subsequently increased by other fugitives, the principal of whom were, Mohamad Umar Khan, Colonel Yar Gool Khan, and Sirdar Abd-u-Salam Khan. At Khaff they remained some days awaiting permission of the authorities at Mashad to repair thither. The young chief was with difficulty restrained by the Governor of Khaff from putting his General to death in punishment of his treacherous desertion of him. He accused him of appropriating the Sirdar's savings and the pay of the troops, and of leading him by his evil advice into a disastrous rebellion.

Ayoob Khan's flight was the signal for the return of the Shahghassee and the Jamshidi chief, and they speedily entered Herat, not only without opposition, but with the consent and to the satisfaction of all parties in the town. A force of two regiments and 100 horse under the Shahghassee set out at once in pursuit of the fugitives, and, on arrival at Kohsan, demanded their surrender from Sirteep Abbass Khan, Governor of Bakharz. This was of course refused.

Ayoob Khan was at first received very coldly by the Persian authorities at Mashad, but received permission to repair thither. He was not met, as is customary, by any of the principal officials. Since then reports are received that he has been ordered honourable treatment, the caravanserai Sipah-Salar has been allotted to him and his followers, and a daily allowance of 40 tomans = Rupees 160. He is attended by servants of the Governor-General's *locum tenens*. General Faqueer Ahmad has again been threatened, and has taken refuge with Abdul Jaleil Khan in the sanctuary.

30th March.—It is reported that seven or eight regiments of the Amir's force, four cavalry regiments and 30 guns have arrived at Herat, and four or five regiments will arrive shortly. Two of the Herat regiments have been disbanded, and four regiments are to be sent to Cabul for service in other parts of the country.

Persian.

Asterabad. *7th March.*—The Turkomans of the Asterabad border, Yemoots, are reported to be in a disturbed state, and constantly raiding the Persian frontier villages. The Governor awaits reinforcements to march out and attack them. He will proceed as far as Finderisk, about 50 miles to the east of Asterabad. The Russian Governor on the East Caspian is at Krasnovodsk, and there is no sign of movement in that direction. The caravan road to Khiva has been closed by raids of the Tekkah and other tribes. This may possibly necessitate some punitive measures.

Koochan. *8th March.*—It is rumoured that there is some disturbance in Koochan, an important district north of Nishapur. The Khan Amir Hoosein Khan Shooja-u-Dowla, Chief of the Zafferandoo tribe of Koords, was guilty of some acts of insubordination to the authority of the late Nizam-u-Dowla in the winter of 1872–73. These were however atoned for, and the Khan apparently pardoned. A sum of 10,000 tomans=Rupees 40,000 was paid by him to the Governor-General as a fine or as a bribe. He accompanied the Governor-General to Teheran last autumn by order, and, on arrival was thrown into prison, and his property confiscated on a charge of misappropriation of some treasure said to have been found by him and not rendered up to Government.

9th March.—Rumour of the disturbance in Koochan confirmed. Nowshirwan Mirza, son of Bahman Mirza, cousin of the Shah, who had been sent from Teheran to take charge of the district, was, on arrival, met by Abul Hassan Khan, son of the chief, driven out and forced to fly to Nishapur. The Zafferandoo Koords, a fine tribe, numbering not less than 20,000 adult males, of whom 1,200 to 1,500 are mounted, are said to be in open rebellion. They are attached to their chiefs, and specially to Abul Hassan Khan, a fine young man, having high reputation as a border leader, and a high character for liberality. The Koords being in close connection with the Akhal Turkomans may possibly receive assistance from them, and the affair bears a serious aspect. Tribal ties are, however, so much loosened, and the power of the Central Government is so much more felt in remote districts than formerly, that very possibly any serious collision will be averted. The influence of the Sipah-Salar Mirza Hoosein Khan, who is virtually Prime Minister, appears to have been employed rather to shield the Khan, and has probably saved his life. His sentence of imprisonment has been commuted to one of exile from this country and he has arrived at Tabreez, the usual place of internment of political offenders. Politically, that is in regard to the true interests of Persia, any diminution of the power of these local chiefs is an advantage. In the new aspects of Turkoman politics, their functions as wardens of the border will be better performed by the Central Government, and a feeling of independence engendered by local power laid them always open to foreign intrigue.

General.

14*th March.*—The Sipah-Salar Mirza Hoosein Khan on this day, the Shah's birthday, gave a dinner to the Foreign Legations and European residents. The omission of Baron Reuter's Agent was remarked, and generally accepted as an evidence of the intention of the Persian Government to persist in disregarding the concessionaire's rights. The affair has not progressed since I last wrote. Baron Reuter maintains his claims in the terms of the original concession, and the Persian Government declare it to be entirely annulled. The Foreign Office has so far taken up Baron Reuter's case as to instruct the British Minister to use his influence in his favour. It is believed, however, that no good will result from this, as the pressure brought to bear on the Persian Government in another direction is so great, that nothing short of a distinct and direct demonstration on the part of the English Government would produce a change in their attitude. The Resht Railway having been in no sense an English scheme, and the rights of the "concessionaire" as a private individual in contract with the Persian Government scarcely admitting of such overt diplomatic interference, it may be doubted whether such action will be taken. In default, the Baron must quit the field and withdraw the staff he still maintains here. This is, no doubt the probable issue, but it is one to be deplored, as likely to have the most damaging effect on British prestige and British influence in this country. Baron Reuter has, in the opinion of the well-informed, no sort of claim on the sympathy of the British Government, for he showed at the outset no particular regard for British interests; but public opinion regards him as an instrument of English policy, engaged under cover of a private contract in carrying out its ends, a view much assisted by the fact that the Baron is himself a British subject, and that the whole of his staff was English. The late public announcement of the interest taken in his affairs by the Foreign Office is regarded as a confirmation merely of the existing impressions. In this view the question may be deemed to become one of public policy, apart from the concessionaire's claims to sympathy as a British subject. The negotiations regarding the Russian concession have not yet been completed, but the late telegram announcing the refusal of the Czar's Government to give a guarantee of the interests of the Russian concessionaire is regarded as a mere blind,—an attempt to delude public opinion into the belief that the concessionaire does not represent the Government. There can be little doubt that the negotiations will be completed and the work commenced under sufficient guarantees within a few months. Whether the project will go beyond driving the English concessionaire out of the field or not, is still a moot-point. It is believed that the railway cannot within any reasonable term pay any portion of its expenses, and that the revenues of Persia are inadequate to support the burden of a guarantee. Unless, therefore, Russia steps in,

which is considered unlikely in the present state of the finances, the necessary credit will not be attained.

The Persian troops will shortly be supplied with the "Tabatiére" breech-loaders purchased in Germany, the weapons being clumsy and inferior, and the difficulties regarding a supply of cartridges are only now being grappled with. Hand machinery has been constructed in the arsenal, capable of turning out about 15,000 cases per diem.

9th March.—It is reported that Mir Alum Khan had left Seistan for Birjand, but whether for private reasons or in consequence of disturbances, was not known.

30th March.—It is reported that Mir Alum Khan has informed the Persian Government that he is unable to hold Seistan with the force at present at his disposal, and considers that it is absolutely necessary that large reinforcements should be sent and a considerable force maintained permanently in the country; also that a permanent masonry bund should be built across the Helmund to secure the supply of water necessary for the Persian villages.

Both these suggestions have, probably, reference to the arrival of Sharif Khan and the occupation by the Afghans of their lands across the Helmund. The immediate result of the construction of a permanent dam, even so far down the course of the Helmund as Kohaq, would certainly be to deprive the Dahshakhar lands, those occupied or about to be occupied by Sharif Khan, of water, for the mouth of the Dahshakhar canals lies below Kohaq, or at least to place the supply in the hands of the Persians. I have no means of ascertaining, but I conceive this to be the countermine that Mir Alum Khan is preparing.

Mr. Mackenzie, to whom I referred in my last letter, left on the 24th ultimo for Shuster.

(Signed) G. C. NAPIER.

In conversation with some Bokharis and Kokundis, who were on their way to the shrine of Sheikh Abdul Kadir in Baghdad, I learnt the following items of news:—

The Russians have lately been thinking of deposing the Amir of Bokhara, whom they suspect of being disloyal to their Government. The Amir is conscious of all this, and will eventually have recourse to the British Government for help and support. He has already opened communication with the Amir of Cabul, in the hope he may, in time of need apply to the English for assistance through him.

The Russian authorities are in communication with the principal men and high officials of the Khanate, and send them presents occasionally. About five months ago they sent silver *samovars* (tea-urns) and chandeliers for Aga Ibrahim Ishan, who is known to be one of the greatest friends the Russians have in Bokhara.

As regards the Russian shop which newspapers give out as having been opened lately in Balkh, they seemed to know nothing about it. They stated that they were in Balkh about three months ago, but never heard anything of the kind, and added that Balkh was in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan belonged to the English, who would not allow a Russian shop being established in their territory.

(Signed) KAZEE SYUD AHMED.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY, APRIL 1875.

Afghanistan.

Note.—The following items of news reported from Herat I note down as received. They are independent of the regular report of the Agent at Meshed, and may therefore be useful to compare with his reports:—

13*th April.*—A report has been received from Mashad and Herat that the Turkomans have sent a deputation of 15 Aksakals to Herat. They are of the Tekkah and Salor tribes, and are charged with the following message to the Ameer of Cabul:—

"We (the Aksakals of the Tekkah and Salor) are fully convinced that sooner or later, perhaps to-day, perhaps to-morrow, the Russians will attack us and subdue us. Such an event would be regarded as a misfortune by us, therefore we turn to you and claim that you should hold out your protecting arm and aid us in our troubles, that we may escape from the grasp of the Russian invader. We are not a people devoured by greed of wealth; we wish for no pay and no presents from you, but are ready the whole of us, the Tekkeh, the Salor, and the Sarik, alike to serve you with our swords.

"We can assure you that a portion* of the Yemoot are of the same mind. We, the united tribes, can put into the field 300,000 men with arms in their hands, and ask nothing better than that you should count these as the men of your own army. You will not fail to see proofs of their devotion to you in the day of battle."

14*th April.*—It is reported also, though on no very reliable authority, that the Ameer proposes sending some regiments of the Herat army to Merve.

15*th April.*—It is reported that the Commander-in-Chief Mirza Hossein Khan on arrival at Herat attached all the property of Khan Aka, Jamshidi, that had been given to him by Yakoob Khan. Also, though the report has yet received no confirmation, that his daughter, wife of Yakoob Khan, had been put to death by the daughter of Yahiya Khan, another wife. Yahiya Khan is the Ameer's first cousin, and is one of the Peshawari Sirdars.

Futtoolla Beg, Firozkohi, has been deprived of the collection of the tax on caravans passing through his country.

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* *Firka*, usually a small portion or tribe, and from the way the name of the Yemoot is introduced, it seems the Aksakals have some doubts about them.

Khan Aka, Jamshidi, has been placed under surveillance on suspicion of conniving at the escape of Ayoob Khan.

The son of Hukumat Khan has been for some time at Cabul, and is said to have done good services.

The ruler of Maimena, Hossein Khan, has been summoned by the Commander-in-Chief to Herat, and it is believed that the son of the murdered Hukumat Khan will be sent there as Afghan Governor.

The Turkomans (probably the raiders of the neighbouring tribes, the Sarik and Salor), have been threatened by the Commander-in-Chief of the Herat force.

Jaleel Khan, Ex-Governor of Kohsan, is with the Turkomans, and has led several raids on Herat territory.

18*th April.*—Abdoolla Khan, Nasiri, has been appointed Governor of Herat, and his son Governor of Ghorian.

Ibrahim Khan of Chukansoor has sent his son Khan Jan Khan with a small force to Candahar to join the Ameer's forces.

The family of Jaleel Khan above-mentioned took the road to Mashad under the impression that the Khan had gone there. His choice of asylum was, therefore, presumably sudden and induced by fear of Ayoob Khan.

Note.—The report of the Turkoman deputation is most probably true. The opportunity offered to them by the presence at Herat of a large force, would not be let slip. They are, I believe, fully prepared to acknowledge the Ameer as their "Agha," but the terms of submission conveyed in their message are not hopeful. They have been so long accustomed to plunder the world that they fail to appreciate the position to which recent events have reduced them. The raids on Herat can have no political significance. The thieves of the Sarik and Salor are not politicians. A plundering band and a friendly deputation may and often do march on the same road. The Persians have come to understand this. The Russians do not, whence many of their misunderstandings with the Turkomans.

Seistan.

It is reported on good authority that Ibrahim Khan of Chukansoor has refused to give his daughter in marriage to Mir Alum Khan as agreed before. He had made the promise in the first instance while under fear that Sharif Khan was intriguing at Cabul to deprive him of his lands, but finding on Sharif Khan's arrival that he had no intentions that were not friendly, he has thrown Persian friends overboard, and is thoroughly loyal to the Amir.

It is also reported that Sharif Khan has been joined by very large numbers of the Persian Seistanis, and that Mir Alum Khan left suddenly for Ghaeen. After his departure, Neybemdan, on the road to Birjund, is said to have been sacked by some rebel Seistanis.

12*th April.*—It is reported that Hosseinabad has been plundered and destroyed by the rebels.

18*th April.*—Troops are reported to have been ordered from Kirman to Seistan.

Note.—The Shooja-u-Dowla Khan of Koochan, whom I reported in my last to have left the capital for Tabreez, is still here. The report current at the time had reference to another chief bearing the same title.

12*th April.*—It is reported that Abool Hassan Khan, son of the Khan of Koochan, has fled to the Turkoman country, and is preparing an expedition to attack some point on the border, and has already made some slight raids.

15*th April.*—Troops left to-day for the east said to be ordered for service on the Koochan border. Shahnawaz Khan has also been ordered to join the camp, and has been entrusted with a command, a complete brigade. His destination is, however, said to be southward towards Ispahan and Fars.

21*st April.*—The Hissam-us-Sultana is reported to have left to-day for Bundar Abbas.

The following items of news from the direction of Asterabad will have some interest:— Asterabad.

Suleyman Khan Afshar, the Governor of Asterabad, has been ordered to Koochan to suppress the disturbances there. On his return he is to proceed to Teheran to answer some complaints that have been made against him.

Some Karatuppa men who have come into Teheran bring information that about 17 days ago the Russian Admiral from Ashurada, accompanied by 15 or 20 officers, landed near Sartook, about a stage above Killa Palangan, the Persian fort on the peninsula of Mian Kalla, and examined the forest and open lands about, looking closely at the soil and digging many wells, the water of which was tasted. Before their arrival the Governor of Ashraf, Abbas Gooli Khan, had received notice from them and wrote to Teheran for instructions. He was ordered not to put them up in the fort, but in tents at some distance. Ten or twelve tents were sent from Teheran by the Shah's orders. There is a spot marked by the ruins of a Russian fort, known as Killa Rusiyan, about four miles along the shore from Sartook towards Killa Palangan, on which the Russians wish now to build a fort, having suffered great loss during last winter storms from the rising of the sea on Ashurada.

The peninsula has a length of about 12 fursakhs=50 to 55 miles, which is reckoned as three stages, and a width of four to five miles. It is said formerly to have been connected with the opposite or the Turkoman shore of the Bay of Ashurada.

The stages from Killa Palangan are Zardi, Moghim, Killa Rusiyan, and Sartook.

It is reported in Mazanderan that the Russians have asked for a site either at Gez or Kara Soo, or on the peninsula, and that the Shah has given them his sanction to repair the old fort of Killa Rusiyan. They have already drawn out the plan of a fort there, and, it is said, will commence building in the autumn.

It is also reported that they have purchased 3,000 or 4,000

camels from Chikishlar, Kara Soo, and other "obahs" of the Yamoot, and are buying flour and corn from Mazanderan and Asterabad.

A paper has been circulated for signature by the Russians among the chief men of the Yamoot tribe calling on them to give their allegiance to the Russian Emperor, but has been met very generally by a refusal.

At Byat Haji also the lines of a fort have been laid out, and it is expected that building operations will commence next winter.

Note.—The news of the proposed occupation of Mian Kalla may be thoroughly relied on; the other reports are possibly mere rumours with scanty foundation of fact.

(Signed) G. C. NAPIER, Captain,
On special duty in Persia.

No. 6.

REPORT ON THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SEISTAN IN RELATION TO LATE ARBITRATION.

No. 18, dated Teheran, 1st March 1875.

From CAPTAIN THE HON. G. C. NAPIER, on special duty in Persia, to C. U. AITCHISON, ESQ., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honour, with reference to paragraph 5 of your letter of instructions, dated 7th November 1874, to submit herewith such information as I was able to gather while in Khorassan regarding the present situation in Seistan in relation especially to the late arbitration on the Perso-Afghan boundary.

Summary of events from winter 1872-73.

The following summary of events in Seistan from the date of the late rebellion to the present time derived solely from Persian sources, which is given as concisely as possible, may be of use for comparison with reports received through Afghanistan, and is almost necessary to preface the subsequent remarks regarding the arbitration.

Mir Alum Khan, Governor.

Mir Alum Khan, Chief of Ghaeen, was Governor of Seistan at the time of the visit of the Arbitration Commission, and had then held the Government for three or four years, having succeeded Taj Mohamed Khan, the hereditary chief of the Sarbandis, who is now under detention at Teheran, and Sharif Khan Nahroe, who was for some time placed in power by the Persians. He is described as an energetic and liberal ruler, and is said to be liked by his own people of Ghaeen and Birjand, but with the Seistanis he is exceedingly unpopular, both personally and on account of the introduction of numerous Ghaeen officials, whose assumption of superiority the Belooch chiefs and their followers could not brook, the Ghaeenis having always in former days been dependent on, and often subject to, the chiefs of Seistan.

It is worthy of note that in March 1872 the British Mission left Seistan apparently without seeing any indication of the disturbances that ensued in the following winter.

Besieged in Persian fort.

On the 10th Zikada 1289 (21st December 1872) Mir Alum Khan was forced to shut himself up in his newly built fort of Nasriya or Nasirabad. At the head of the coalition against him were:

Rebel Chiefs. Ibrahim Khan, Sanjurani.

(1.) Ibrahim Khan of Chakansur, who though continuing to reside on the Afghan side of the boundary, gave his countenance and some aid to the Seistanis. He had suffered the loss of eight or nine hamlets on the Persian side of the river made over to Sharif Khan by the Governor.

Ahmad Khan, Ishkazai of Lash.

(2.) Ahmad Khan of Lash Jouvein, who, at one time, enjoyed the favour of the Shah of Persia, and received money and presents from his hands. He believed that the Chief of Ghaeen had come between him and the Persian Sovereign, and had to complain of frequent raids on his villages and of support given by the chief to his nephew and enemy Sultan Mohamed Khan, to whom the village of Nohak had been granted.

Sharif Khan, Nahroe.

(3.) Sharif Khan, who, though connected by marriage and not actually on bad terms with the Chief of Ghaeen, finding all his people and the principal chiefs united in opposition, went with the stream.

Kamal Khan, Sanjurani.

(4.) Kamal Khan of Bunder and Imam Khan of Roodbar (since dead), and Sarfaraz Khan, Belooch, who had all to complain of loss of villages or lands. Both Kamal Khan and Imam Khan had villages on the Persian side of the boundary.

Abbas Khan, Kayani.

(5.) Mullik Abbas Khan, Kayani, an influential chief, though in full sympathy, did not openly join in the rebellion; his brother Oosay Khan being detained by Mir Alum Khan in the fort. He, however, to make sure of being on the right side, sent his brother Gulzar Khan to the insurgent camp.

Rebel clans.*

The clans of Seistan, united against the Persian Governor, were the Sanjurani, Kayani, Shahreki, Nahroe, Sarbandi, Karanzai of Kharan,* and the Noorzai and Alezai Elyats, who furnished 500 men. The Chief of Lash Jouvein is said to have been present, and some Eeljari or Militia of Furrah under Mohamed Omar Khan, Alezai, who would probably be the 500 Elyats above referred to.

The Governor had with him some Birjandis, his own people, 100 men of Darg, and Sultan Mohamed Khan, nephew of Sultan Ahmad Khan of Lash, and Mir Jafir Khan, Sarbandi, the only Seistani on his side.

Troops from Mashad.

On the 1st Mohurrum (about 10th February) a force was sent to Seistan with Abbas Khan Sartip, Herati, Ataoolla Tymore, and Baba Khan, Hazara, consisting of the regiments of Turshiz and Damghan with two guns, 600 horse Tymori and Hazara, and 100 Shamkhalchis (mounted matchlock-men). By the end of Mohurrum the Governor was reduced to the last extremity, having been driven out of Huseinabad into the "ark" or citadel of Nasriya, leaving a gun in the hands of the insurgents. 40 or 50 men had been killed during the siege or blockade, and provisions had come to an end.

* Probably nomads from the southern portion of the basin.

Negotiations.

At this juncture Ibrahim Khan, who apparently had no wish to push matters to extremities, stepped in, and by his influence with the Seistanis procured a cessation of hostilities and fair terms for the Governor, who was allowed to retire with all his property and followers, carriage being provided by Ibrahim Khan. This chief is said to have received a large sum of money and large promises of reward on the return of the Governor with Persian troops. After the baggage and women of the Ghaeenis had been sent off, and before the evacuation of the fort, news was received of the approach of the Persian regiments. The insurgents began to disperse, and the Governor refused to surrender.

Mustowfi Mirza Mohammad Husein.

In the next month Safar (about end February), Mirza Mohammad Husein, Mustowfi, and Mustafa Kooli Khan Sartip, who had been sent from Mashad entrusted with full powers to inquire into the grievances of the Seistanis, arrived, and were met by the whole of the Seistan chiefs, who conducted them into Huseinabad. They declared themselves ready to obey any orders from the Shah, but would not again put themselves under the yoke of the Ghaeenis.

The Governor, having now troops at his back, was for taking severe measures, but the two pacificators took a different view, and their first act was to order him out of the country. They reported to the Governor-General of Khorassan that the Seistanis had many causes of complaint against Mir Alum Khan, and were now completely pacified by his departure. After taking an oath and written acknowledgment of allegiance from Sharif Khan, and from Ibrahim Khan also by direction of the Governor-General, they returned to Mashad.

The Simsam-ul-Mulk.

In Rabi .ul Awal (April) the Simsam-ul-Mulk arrived in Seistan as Governor. He was met by all the chiefs save Sharif Khan, who sent his brother Sherdil Khan in his place, pleading sickness, but he had, in truth, received a hint that the Persian Government was ill disposed towards him.

Sherdil Khan was sent back with a threatening message, and Sharif Khan at once prepared for flight, sending his wives and property across the river. Under the security of an oath given by Abbas Khan, Herati, he subsequently made a formal submission and brought his household back to the Persian side, but still would not trust himself within reach of the Persian Governor. His brother, Sherdil Khan accompanied Abbas Khan to Mashad, and there lodged a complaint against the Simsam-ul-Mulk, who, he said, was dissatisfied at the turn affairs had taken and the quiet submission of Sharif Khan and others, whereby he was deprived of the chances of enriching himself at their expense, that would have presented themselves, if the rebels had remained obdurate. The Governor-General sent him back to summon Sharif Khan to Mashad under safe conduct, but he did not live to reach his journey's end.

Abbas Khan Sartip sent to Teheran.

Abbas Khan was then sent to Teheran to explain the state of affairs to the Ministers, and took back to the Governor-General

an assurance that he Simsam-ul-Mulk should be recalled, and the Government of Seistan left entirely in his hands.

In the meantime the further reinforcement asked for by the Simsam-ul-Mulk having arrived, he determined to force Sharif Khan to submission, and send troops to attack him in Sharifabad. The chief was taken by surprise and fled without resistance, leaving his property to be plundered by the Persians. This affair is called the battle of Sharifabad, the troops were commanded by General Buhler, an Alsatian in the Shah's service. This event occurred in the month of Rajub, about August 1873.

Plunder of Sharifabad and flight of Sharif Khan.

Ibrahim Khan, who had abetted the rebellious conduct of Sarif Khan, had also on the first alarm retired to Chakansur abandoning his villages on the Persian side, which were immediately confiscated by the Persian Governor.

Ibrahim Khan abandons his villages on the Persian side.

In the winter of 1873–74 the Simsam-ul-Mulk was recalled and succeeded in the following spring by Mohamad Jafir Khan son of Mohamad Wali Khan, who was nominated by the Governor-General. He received strict injunctions to conciliate the chiefs and people, but appears to have failed in furthering Persian interests with sufficient vigour. Mirza Mahomed Ali Ghaeeni (subsequently sent to Herat) accompanied him as Mustowfi or Chief Accountant, and appears to have acquired much influence in the country. Being an enemy of Mir Alum Khan and exiled from Ghaeen, it was supposed that he would be acceptable to the Seistanis.

Mohamad Jafir Khan, Governor.

Before the recall of the Simsam-ul-Mulk, one Haji Shah Mohamad had been sent from Teheran commissioned on the part of the Persian Government to demarcate, in conjunction with an Afghan deputy, the boundary laid down by the Arbitration Commissioners.

Deputation of Haji Shah Mohamad to demarcate boundary.

Arrangements had been made for the meeting before, and the Afghan deputy had once arrived in Seistan, but returned on finding no one to meet him.

Early in the month of Shawal (September) a meeting was effected and a number of the Seistan chiefs summoned to Husseinabad. The Simsam-ul-Mulk, however, found reasons for delaying the demarcation and finally dismissed the deputies, on the plea that all the necessary revenue and administrative arrangements for the partition of lands and demarcation were not complete.

Meeting with Afghan deputy.

It is stated also that Haji Shah Mohamad had orders to make secret inquiries into the alleged extortion of the late Governor Mir Alum Khan, and reported that he had, during his four or five years' tenure, extracted from the people, over and above the revenue, about 280,000 tomans.

After the departure of the Haji came the change of Government, and the country remained tranquil through the spring and summer of 1874. Mohamad Jafir Khan, however, though popular, was not considered efficient, and his recall was talked of as certain.

In August 1874 Mir Alum Khan returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca, and after some stay in Mashad, left for his home in Birjand.

Return of Mir Alum Khan.

Re-appointed Governor.

In December 1874 he was again sent to Seistan, and reinstalled in the Governorship in place of Mohamad Jafir Khan. This step could not fail to be displeasing to the Seistanis, whose submission had been purchased by his recall, and already rumours of disturbances reached Teheran.

Deputation of elders.

A deputation of the elders of villages, headed by Mustowfi Mohamad Ali, is at present here, but their prayer for the removal of the new Governor is not likely to be heard. The result, however, is not yet known.

Particulars regarding Mir Alum Khan.

Some further particulars regarding Mir Alum Khan may perhaps be of interest. The Khan is a short, stout, well preserved man, of about 45 years of age, with a stolid heavy look, and a face of Afghan rather than Persian type. In dress and exterior he follows Persian fashions closely, identifying himself with them ostentatiously. He is said to be liberal and kind in his dealings with his own people, but exceedingly overbearing and haughty towards the Seistanis. Under his rule the country advanced in material improvement and security; and he would not, under favorable circumstances, perhaps prove a bad ruler. But situated as he is on the borders of Afghanistan and Persia, subject to the jealousy of the one party and the enmity of the other, influenced by local interests, and swayed by traditional or personal feelings of sympathy or enmity towards each chief and clan on the border, he can never be a popular, or, for the true interests of Persia, a good ruler, and it is a misfortune that he should be again entrusted with extensive and almost irresponsible powers. His re-appointment, however, though it will be thoroughly displeasing to the Afghans, does not necessarily indicate the existence of a policy of encroachment and of hostility towards Afghanistan, for it is apparently as likely to be due to Court intrigue.

Mir Alum Khan had given offence, in various ways, to the Hissam-ul-Sultana, the Governor-General of Khorassan, and ultimately defied his authority, finding protection and countenance from the Prime Minister at Teheran. This sufficed to distinguish him, and it is, perhaps, merely to gratify these feelings of jealousy that the Minister has permitted his return to the province.

Present position of the Persians in Seistan with reference to the boundary line.

The following information regarding the attitude of the Persians with regard to the boundary laid down by the Arbitration Commission is derived wholly from Persians and Seistanis of the Persian side, and I have been unable either at Mashad or in Teheran to check it from official sources, but while it is necessary to declare this, I believe that the truth of the statements I received may be fully relied on. The deputation of Haji Shah Mohamad Khan, above referred to, appears to have been the first step taken by the Persian Government towards an actual demarcation of the boundary line. He arrived, as was stated, after much delay, and was met by an Afghan deputy, and a number of the Seistani chiefs and Mulliks, who were assembled to assist in the deliberations.

Failure of ostensible object of Haji Shah Mohamad's mission.

Simsam-ul-Mulk opposes demarcation.

The Governor of Seistan, the Simsam-ul-Mulk, had also, to advise him, Zulfikar Khan, a Major of Persian Engineers, and

Abbas Khan Sartip, Herati, who had served in the country for some time, and was well acquainted with the people. The Seistanis were very shortly dismissed, and after them the Afghan deputy; the Governor declaring that, on the pretexts above noted, the demarcation could not be carried on.

It is possible that the Haji's mission was merely to ascertain and report to Teheran the effect on Persian interests of the demarcation, if carried out strictly according to the award; whether so or not, this was its only result. He, in concert with the Governor, reported, it is said, strongly against the proposed demarcation, giving various reasons, the principal of which were detailed to me by Major Zulfikar Khan himself, and to some extent attested by my Seistani informants. The weight to be attached to these objections will be known to the officers of the Seistan Mission, by whom all such points must have been fully discussed. The report of the Commission not being in my hands to refer to, and having no local knowledge, I was unable to gauge their value, or in fact to do much more than note them. The main objection raised, one which it is said vitiates entirely the justice of the arbitration award, is that the Afghans are able at any time by sufficient exertions, to cut off entirely the water of the Helmund from the upper portion of Seistan Proper, which is within the Persian line, and that this will be the ultimate result of the re-occupation of the old seats of population on the Afghan side of the Helmund, known as Palungi, Sar-o-Zar, Amiran, Siahposhan, &c.

Objections raised by Governor to boundary line.

1st. Afghans have command of water of Helmund.

The swampy malarious basin, it is argued, has come to be the seat of the densest population since the destruction of the old cities and of the canals, by which the fine lands to the south of the basin and on the right bank were rendered unculturable. A state of constant wars and anarchy and frequent changes of rulers, the result of the position of the country between Persia, Herat, and Afghanistan, have combined to prevent the re-occupation of the better lands. It is feared, and apparently with reason, that with the establishment of Afghan rule on the right bank, facilities and encouragement to a re-settlement will be given, the result of which will be not only to limit the supply of water available for Seistan Proper, but to draw away much of the population at present settled there. This, I was informed, would, undoubtedly, be the result of an energetic resort to works of irrigation on the Afghan side, even if the whole country were under one rule; when therefore, the Persians are aware that their people are in the main disaffected, as events continue to prove, they have good reason to fear a ruinous desertion of their lands.

Present population removed from other tracts after destruction of ancient towns.

2nd. Population induced to emigrate.

It is probable that some stipulation was made regarding a division of the water of the Helmund by the "arbitrator," but if so, it is never alluded to by the Persians. They perhaps feel, as they well may, the futility of any such conditions under circumstances precluding the possibility of a speedy settlement of disputes. The party naturally the stronger and with the strongest hold on the country, having entire command of the source of the water

Stipulation regarding division of Helmund water probable.

supply, and it being practically impossible to refer a dispute for settlement to any third party, the weaker party has good reasons to fear that its interests will suffer. After discussing this question, and looking at it as far as possible from all points, the conclusion arrived at is that the Persians have certainly much reason to fear loss of population and consequently of revenue, but that whether they have any reason to complain is doubtful. Many causes have for a long period combined to crowd an abnormally large population in the portion of the country that has fallen to their lot. A change of conditions threatens to alter this arrangement of the population and permit the return of things to their normal condition. This surely is cause for regret but not for complaint or objection, when the change of conditions and its result is one that must have been foreseen at least on the spot, and might have been made the ground for rejection of the arbitration.

Traku lands.

To the south of the Seistan basin and of the boundary line, and west and south of Bunder Kamal Khan, stretches, it is said, a wide tract of fine arable land known as Traku.

It is studded with the ruins of villages, but has long remained a waste, on which graze the herds of the Seistan and Belooch nomads. The whole is said to be irrigable by the water of the Helmund, and of far greater fertility and value than the lands of the basin, where fields and villages are constantly liable to destructive inundation. It is in fact said to be worth more, *i.e.*, capable of supporting a larger population, than the whole of inhabited Seistan.

Desire of Persians to retain.

It is to the relinquishment of this tract that the Persians object, and its possession would probably leave them little to desire; for it would form a counterpoise in their hands to the advantages enjoyed by the Afghans in the possession of the lands on the right bank, and a counter attraction to the wavering population.

The Simsam-ul-Mulk appears to have been especially bent on the acquisition of these Traku lands, and it was the hope of ultimately effecting his object that induced him, it would seem, to oppose the demarcation and the alleged purpose of the Persian Government to give effect to the decision of the arbitration.

3rd. Loss of the Naizar.

In addition to the fear of losing the water of the Helmund, and the possible attraction to the Afghan side of the population, the Persians complain of the loss of the greater portion of the "Naizar," the belt of reed beds skirting the permanent lakes of Seistan, which are valuable for various purposes, especially for grazing, a large part of the revenue of Seistan Proper being derived from a tax on cattle.

Boundary not demarcated.

The Persians, or at least the local authorities, thus finding their position in the country a disadvantageous one, refused to accept the arbitration as a *fait accompli.*

Not declared to the people.

The actual position of the boundary line, which is locally known as the "Seem," has never been declared to the people, but is nevertheless, to some extent, known to them, and the effects of its demarcation much discussed.

The boundary line also, and consequently, has not been uniformly respected. Consequently not respected.

As regards the actual possession of the tracts affected by the arbitration, it was difficult to obtain exact information, for the local authorities purposely leave that question as little defined as possible. With free access even to the people who chanced to be at Meshed, it might have been possible to ascertain with some exactness the villages and lands from which revenue is actually taken, but even this would be an unsafe test, for the revenue paying tracts appear to vary somewhat with the state of the relations at the time of demand between the local governor and the local chiefs. There are, however, no Persian troops beyond the actual boundary line, and they have relinquished possession of, though not their claim to, the villages between Kohak and Bunder Kamal Khan. No Persian troops beyond boundary.

From the Traku lands up to last summer a grazing tax was levied, but this appears to have been since discontinued. It is to the north of the basin that they have not withdrawn altogether within the line laid down, for though not actually in armed possession, they have succeeded in obtaining revenue from a number of villages on the Afghan side for the past year. The Afghan Government possibly has been too much occupied in other directions to give heed to complaints or to forward them. Bunder Kamal Khan and Traku given up. Revenue taken from villages beyond northern boundary line.

Both Sharif Khan and Ibrahim Khan have villages on the Afghan side of the northern boundary line, which they have abandoned under pressure of personal fear, and which are actually in the possession of the Persians. And Abbas Khan, Kayani, who appears to have at first held aloof from the rebellion, sending a brother to each side, but ultimately to have joined in it, has also villages on both sides of the boundary line, the whole of which are assessed by the Persians. Abandoned villages of rebel chiefs virtually in Persian hands.

It apparently, however, rests with the Afghans by a vigorous occupation of their rights to put an end to such encroachments, and there is probably little reason to fear a collision, if they content themselves with occupying their own villages. Afghans appear to have failed to assume their rights.

In conclusion, I will give in as few words as possible the conclusions I have arrived at as to the views held by the several parties interested regarding the arbitration and its future prospects.

The Persians, and especially those who have local knowledge, appear to regard the arbitration as a device to rob them of the lands they have acquired and have an ancestral claim to, by taking advantage of the weakness and ignorance of the Shah and his Ministers, and this is in the interest not of the Afghans but of the Government that promoted the arbitration. Believing this, and seeing also more plainly the losses that may ultimately be suffered by the more complete occupation of the lands on the Afghan side of the Helmund, they are furnished with a motive for disregarding the award and delaying as long as possible to give effect to it, and are stimulated thereto by a hope that some change of fortune may in the meantime occur to improve their position. Every year that they can delay a settlement of the country and the occupation of the Afghan land is a direct gain, and also leaves room for changes that must be favorable. For, in the opinion of Persian opinions.

those Persians with whom I have conversed on the subject, their position in the country is so bad that if the arbitration award be strictly adhered to, their share of it will not be worth holding, and that matters being thus at the worst any change that time may produce must be to their advantage. Such opinions fully explain why the people are left in the dark regarding the boundary, and are led to believe that the matter is still unsettled, and that there is room for further changes.

Opinions of Seistan.

The view taken by the Seistanis is very much the Persian view. They show that they believe, though they may not say so in so many words, that the arrangement was forced on the Persians, by us for our own benefit, and that in awarding so much of the country to the Afghans we were simply gaining our own ends. They talk of the Afghan side of the boundary almost invariably as "mal i Inglis" (English possession) and of the people as "raiyat i Inglis." Such beliefs are the natural outcome of Afghan friendship towards the Mission and of Persian hostility, followed by an award, regarded as in every way favorable to the Afghans; and as they are an article of faith with every Seistan peasant, and tend to imbue him with a deep feeling of respect for the distant nation wielding a power that is mysterious and almost unseen and yet affects the relations of his present and future daily life, and with a feeling of contempt for the Persians, who, while evincing their hostility by every act and their dislike to the arrangements forced on them by insidious encroachments, are unable to openly resent the interference, they cannot be disregarded or passed over as unworthy of note.

Of the feelings of the Afghans regarding the award, I had no means of judging save at second hand.

They appear to have been to some extent disappointed at the loss of the revenue-paying portion of Seistan, though on the whole satisfied.

The Persian portion of the country is now and must for some time remain by far the most valuable, the settlement of other portions being a matter of time. Persian Seistan is the granary of Western Afghanistan and of parts of Persia. Wheat is exported to Yezd, a journey of 24 days, to Candahar and Cabul. It was selling this year at 100 lbs. per kran (10 pence), and barley at a still lower rate. The revenue for the past year was 22,700 kharwars and 4,000 tomans in cash. It is not therefore surprising that there should be some little jealousy of the superior advantages enjoyed by the Persians, but the feeling is probably local, and it is on the spot that the real advantages secured by the award are best known and appreciated. It is satisfactory to learn on the best authority that the Afghans remained entirely neutral during the late disturbances, at least subsequently to the first attack on the Persian settlement.

Kharwar of 700 lbs. about.

Future prospects.

Of the future prospects of the arbitration as a measure aimed at securing the present peace of the tract affected by it, the view presented is rather gloomy, as may be inferred from the following facts. The new Governor, as before mentioned, is thoroughly unpopular, and will complete the alienation of the people from

Unpopularity of new Governor.

their allegiance to the Shah. The Persians affirm that he is not unpopular with the lower classes, but there are, on the other side, the facts that the people rose in rebellion against him as one man, and that his return has been followed by rumours of fresh disturbances, and the deputation of 60 of the headmen of villages, not chiefs, to pray for his removal. He is almost pledged by local connections and feuds to a policy of aggression and provocation, and is placed beyond reach of efficient control. He finds also a border undefined, and probably undefinable by any means at present at his command.

Border undefined.

On the other side are two chiefs, who have been, by the late measures of his predecessors, estranged from his government and are his enemies. The first causes of difference between him and the chiefs, Ibrahim Khan and Sharif Khan, have been noted before. Ibrahim Khan subsequently aided in his escape, and might be presumed favorable to him, but he is said to be exasperated at the ill-requital of his services by the Simsam-ul-Mulk, and now devoted to the Afghan cause. His treacherous character is well known, but it cannot be doubted that very great sacrifices would be necessary to win him back. With the Afghans and Sharif Khan he is now on good terms, having been spared the threatened division of his lands. Sharif Khan, who has lost the five villages—Sharifabad, Killa Now, Killa Kohna, Kimak, and Burj Alam Khan—that he possessed on the Persian side, and was plundered by the Persians, has now returned from Cabul, and has been granted lands at Killa Fath and on the left bank opposite Jelallabad. The former are to be irrigated by the opening of two old canals, known as Zarkan-o-Zoorkan, which formerly watered a tract stretching through the lands of Palangi, near Killa Fath, to Chakansur, and money for the work has been advanced by the Amir of Cabul. This will, it is said, at once draw over the whole of the Nahroe tribe, and probably emigrants from many others. The latter is a well watered tract, known as Dahshakha, on which are extensive ruins bearing the same name, 8 miles west from the Helmund, and 14 miles north-east of Nasirabad. A fort is to be built there as a stronghold of that portion of the Afghan territory, and to check the encroachments of the Persian. Sharif Khan comes to Seistan pledged to carry out this work within sight almost of the Persian garrisons, and it seems probable that he will not do so free of interference.

Hostile neighbours.

Return of Sharif Khan.

Proposed occupations by latest accounts of Killa Fath and Dahshakha.

Kamal Khan of Bunder also, whose position at the head of the old canals that used to water the Traku lands, and might, if re-opened, continue to irrigate the Seistan basin even if the Afghans should fully occupy the opposite tract, and would be a valuable one to the Persians, is suspected of intrigues. He has been ordered by the Amir to relinquish his intercourse with the Persians or his lands; and these have been already promised in prospective to the sons of Sirdar Mohamad Hosein Khan, Barakzai, Governor of Subzwar.

The whole of the people of Seistan appear to be wavering between the retention of their lands under Persian rule and immigration to the Afghan side. The families of more than 5,000

Wholesale emigration by latest accounts possible.

men, who were implicated in the late rebellion, have been sent across the river since the return of the new Governor, and the first act of severity, it is said, will be the signal for a general flight. Though the aspect of affairs appears thus threatening, it is possible that the storm may pass away, for the recall of Mir Alum Khan is a possible contingency, and the Persians have a great hold on the people in the possession of the lands they have now occupied for many generations. The position is not certainly worse than must have been anticipated, and the arbitration may be deemed to have gained its end where it has averted, as is believed in the country, a collision between the rival nationalities. Local difficulties are minor questions, for the settlement of which a basis and ample time has been gained.

Present state of affairs must have been anticipated.

Arbitration has averted collision and given time for settlement of minor difficulties.

List of villages.

The annexed list of villages, based on the list given by Dr. Bellew in his official report, with corrections suggested by a Seistani Mullik, and some further information, may, perhaps, prove of use.

Azad Khan.

Regarding Azad Khan of Kharan, whose son last year visited the Amir of Cabul, and about whom some question as to ownership of lands in Seistan was raised, I was unable, after careful inquiry, to ascertain that he had any lands at all in Seistan, and certainly none that could be included in the Persian boundary. Belooch nomads of Kharán at times visit with their flocks the Traku lands, and it is possible that a tax may have been levied on some of these by the Persians.

No. and Name of Village.	Tribe.	Remarks.
1. Jelalabad	Kayānī.	
2. Burj-i-Afghan	Sarbandī, Dehkān, and Afghan.	
3. Bunjar	Sarbandī and Kayānī.	
4. Shytan	„ and „	
5. Bolay	„ and Dehkān.	
6. Bolay	„ and „	
7. Kāsimābād	„ and Kalantari.	
8. Iskil	Kalantari.	
9. Zāhīdan	Sarbandī and Dehkān	Ibrahim Khan, Persian side.
10. Khadang	Dehkān and mixed tribes.	
11. Boghbar	„ „	
12. Kechgan	Kayānī.	
13. Afzalābad	Mixed tribes and Sirbandī.	
14. Nāsirabād (Fort)	Kayānī and Persians.	
15. „ (Town)	Sarbandī and Dehkān.	
16. Sekoha	Sarbandī.	
17. Pusht-i-Dasht	„	
18. Warmal	„	
19. Sadki	„	
20. Dowlatābād	Half Kayānī	Half property of Abbas Khan.
21. Chiling	Sarbandī.	
22. Doday	„	
23. Hoseinābād	„	
24. Burj-i-Haji	„	
25. Bahrāmābād	Kayānī.	
26. Ibrāhīmābād	Sarbandī	Ibrahim Khan, Persian side.
27. Changi Murghān	„	
28. Dashta	Shahreki.	
29. Kimak	Nahroe	Sharif Khan.
30. Wāsitān	Shahreki.	

No. and Name of Village.	Tribe.	Remarks.
31. Pulki	Shahreki.	
32. Kanah	„	
33. Shitak	„	
34. Tiflak	„	
35. Laff	„	
36. Jazinak	„	
37. Burj Sirband	„	
38. Khammak	„	
39. Cabri	„	
40. Ziyārat Gah	„	
41. Burj Alam Khan	Nahroe	Sharif Khan.
42. Cala Now	„	Do.
43. Sharifābād	„	Do.
44. Kimuck	„	
45. Abbas Ali	Sarbandī.	
46. Kod	„	
47. Chākansúr	Sanjurānī.	
48. Khash	„	
49. Kaddah	„	
50. Jahānābād	„	Ibrahim Khan, Persian side.
51. Nadali	„	
52. Tiftak	„	
53. Rodbār	„	
54. Chārburjak	„	
55. Bundar Kamal Khan	„	Iman Khan (deceased), who made over to Sharif Khan.
56. Khyrābād	„	
57. Ishkinak	Isakzai.	
58. Hoseinābād	„	
59. Alamdār	Sanjurānī.	
60. Khwaja Ahmed	„	Ibrahim Khan.
61. Nazar Khan	„	
62. Aghā Jān Khan	„	Ibrahim Khan, Persian side.
63. Dih Sayat	„	Ibrahim Khan.
64. Dih Mir Jafir Khan	„	Do.
65. Dih Sirkam Khan	„	Do.
66. Dih Pahlawān	„	Do.
67. Kila Margo	- - - -	Ibrahim Khan, and half property of Abbas Khan.
68. Shahristān	- - - -	Ibrahim Khan.
69. Dih Aghai	- - - -	Do.
70. Dih Asadullah	- - - -	Do.
71. Dih Jafir Khan	- - - -	Do.
72. Ganda Reg	- - - -	Do.
73. Malika	- - - -	Ibrahim Khan, and half property of Abbas Khan.
74. Magoon.		
75. Dih Balaj.		
76. Dih Fakeer Mohamad.		
77. Dakki.	- - - -	Ibrahim Khan, and half property of Abbas Khan.
78. Kalakhi.		
79. Kala Kohna	- - - -	Sharif Khan.
80. Dih Khālikdād.		
81. Dih Sokhta.		
82. Kalpibaz.		
83. Dih Nazar Khan.		
84. Dih Allahdad.		
85. Dih Mohamad Karbalāi.		
86. Karkoo.		
87. Dih Shighalak.		
88. Dih Rustum.		
89. Burj-i-Mir Alam.		
90. Dih Kohak.		

No. 7,

Report on the Perso-Afghan Border.

No. 19, dated Teheran, 2nd April 1875.

From Capt. the Hon. G. C. Napier, on Special Duty in Persia, to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I have the honour to submit, for the information of Government, the enclosed memorandum on the condition, resources, &c., of the Perso-Afghan border, with some notes on the Herat territory.

Perso-Afghan Border.

Defences and condition of Persian frontier line.

The Persian frontier marches with that of Afghanistan from an undefined point in the neighbourhood of Ak Derbund, the Heri-Rood forming the boundary. From Ak Derbund south as far as the district of Jam the tract behind the frontier line is known as the Pusht-i-Koh-i-Jam, and is described as open and undulating, with no want of water or grass. It is uninhabited to within a few miles of Mashad.

Pusht-i-Koh-i-Jam.

On the Persian bank of the Heri-Rood are four small posts:—

Kala Khuda Bux,	20 men,	6	fursakhs from	Shorchai.
Kala Garm Ab,	20 „	6	„	south.
Kala Zulficar,	20 „	6	„	south.
Kala Nalshani,	20 „	5	„	south.

These were intended to protect the border against Turkoman raids, but of course proved insufficient, and are now often left untenanted for many weeks between reliefs.

Nearer than Mashad there are no forces to support them, save the petty garrisons of the posts on the Kashaf Rood from Shorchai to Moozderan, which have a nominal strength of only 100 horse and 250 foot.

Jam.

The district of Jam or Turbat-i-Shaikh-i-Jam is bounded on the north and south by low ranges of hills, and watered by a small stream rising south-east of Mashad in the Sarjam plain. The border line is still the Heri-Rood.

Border posts and available fighting force.

The following posts for its protection exist at least in name:—

Kahrez Eyas,	20 cavalry,	6	fursakhs,	junction of Jam stream.
Namak Zar,	20 „	4	„	
Tumun Agha,	20 „	8	„	not occupied for two or three years by Persians. Afghans of Kohsan live there, and till the land in the bed of the stream.
Kafir Kala,	20 „	6	„	on border of Jam not occupied.

To support these posts there is at Jam five or six fursakhs in rear of the north of the line, a force of 400 horse, chiefly Hazaras, and Taimuris, in pay of the Persian Government, and an armed population, numbering 2,500 houses and tents, capable of furnishing perhaps 2,000 matchlock men. The principal villages are Jam or

Turbat-i-Shaikh-i-Jam and Feriman. At Kahrez, a large post on the Herat road in rear of Kafir Kala, but forming now the actual frontier post, is a nominal force of 200 horse, chiefly Hazaras furnished from Bakharz.

The forces of the district may therefore be reckoned at 600 horse and 200 footmen; for the garrisons of the posts on the river, if existing, except on the pay-roll, count for nothing.

Behind these there is nothing nearer than Mashad, Turbat and Turshiz.

The population of Jam consists chiefly of Taimuris, but the 2,500 families include also Heratis, fugitives from Ghorian and Kohsan, Karai, and a local tribe known as Jamis, of Persian origin. Population.

They live in Jam, and a small circle of hamlets, and in Feriman, a large village on the Sarjam plain, at the head of that stream.

The district is said to be barren, and the water supply deficient. I am without any exact information as to its surplus produce, but it may be safely assumed that it could not be drawn upon for supply to any but a very limited extent. Resources for supply.

The annual revenue paid by the district is the trifling sum of 400 tomans and 300 kharwars of grain, and this, though a "border" assessment, may be accepted as a fair measure of its resources.

South of Kafir Kala the border line passes into a tract of broken hilly country, barren and uninhabited. The ridges run mainly from north-west to south-east, and are ramifications of the great spur of Alburz that passes to the south of Mashad. They extend in an easterly direction from the Persian border, and subside in the elevated plateau south of Herat, connecting them with the northern Afghan mountain system. Bakharz.

Behind Shahr-i-Now, the principal village of Bakharz, the range rises to a considerable height, forming the high peak known as the Koh Bizh, which has snow on its sides far into the summer, and thence falls away eastward, passing behind Taybad and Kafir Kala to the banks of the Heri-Rood.

The two mountains marked in our maps as Doshakh and Sang Dukhtar are mere isolated hills south of this ridge, and divided from it by a strip of plain, along which runs the road from Ghorian to Khaff.

The Persian border line thence runs about south of Taybad, undefined and unguarded, into the great expanse of desert, stretching from Subzwar to the borders of Ghain, across which also there is no defined boundary till the border of Lash Jouven is reached. The hills south of Taybad (a village of 100 houses at foot of hills and a post of 30 horse), and west nearly to the border of Khaff, are grazed by the Alizai and Noorzai nomads of the Subzwar district, who take their flocks also into the desert west, till they meet those of Khaff and Ghain.

This portion of the frontier line being so well protected by nature, it is perhaps unnecessary that it should be watched. The Turkomans pass to the north between Kahrez and Kafir Kala,

and an Afghan force directed on Persia would either strike at Mashad by the same line, or at Khaff and Ghain from Ghorian by the Karat Pass which is guarded from Khaff, or at Seistan.

Forces. Bakharz has a population of 3,000 families and tents, chiefly Hazaras. The principle village, Shahr-i-Now, has 1,500 families and tents, 200 of which are Hazaras; the rest are Karai, Heratis, and a local tribe known as Bakharzis, emigrants from the interior districts. All are armed, and could furnish probably 2,000 to 2,500 matchlock men: 200 horse are kept ready for border defence, and a detachment of the Hazara or Jamshidi horse, in the pay of Persia, are usually stationed there.

Resources. Including the village of Kahrez, said to contain 200 houses, Bakharz has 30 small hamlets on the plain and hill skirts. The district is well cultivated, and soil said to be fertile. The hills and uncultivated plains are covered with grass, and water is not deficient. No exact information as to the surplus produce of the district was to be obtained, but from general information and consideration of the numbers of the population, a large section of which is also nomadic, and of the revenue, I assume that it cannot much more than suffice to supply the wants of the district. The revenue is given at 1,200 tomans per annum and 780 kharwars of grain. The grain is now applied to the maintenance of the Hazara and Jamshidi border guards.

Politics. The Taimuris of Jam and the Hazaras of Bakharz are still Sunnis, and not by any means loyal to their Persian Governors. The Taimuris especially have frequently made common cause with the Turkomans, to resist whom they were first entertained and granted lands, and have raided with them on their fellow-subjects in the interior districts.

The treatment their chiefs meet with also at the hands of successive Persian Governors is not calculated to secure their loyalty. Pampered and allowed to remain idle hangers-on of the Viceregal *Majlis* (Court) by one Governor, they are fleeced, squeezed, and bullied by his successor. Nothing is certain in their relations with the Government, save the uncertainty of the manner in which their services will be recompensed.

With the Eimaks of the Herat district across the river the Taimuris and Hazaras are constantly at feud, regarding thefts of cattle, horses, and petty raids on detached camps. It is seldom, however, that blood is spilt.

Apart from such causes of local disagreement, there can be little doubt that an enemy from Herat would not have much to fear from the hostility of the inhabitants of the two border districts, and that he would also have a very good prospect of finding chiefs and followers ready to make common cause with him.

Chiefs. Bakharz is at present ruled by Sirteep Abbas Khan, a Herati in the Persian service. The principal chiefs of the Taimuris of Mashad and the border are Hyder Khan and Ali Murdan Khan, residing at Mashad, and Ataoolla Khan. The hereditary chief of Bakharz is Abdul Naki Khan, but he has now no word in the Government.

Khaff, though separated by a neutral tract of mountain and desert from Afghanistan, and nominally a *belook* of Turbat, may be regarded also as a border district. It is also, a very possible point of attack from Afghanistan, as a force holding it would threaten the main line of communication between Mashad and Seistan. The district lies south of the Koh Bizh and on the eastern edge of the "Kavir" or "Great Desert." The route from Ghorian is described as not difficult. After crossing the Heri-Rood and the south-east spur of Alburz at a low point, it keeps south of that ridge to the Karat Pass, where it gains the highlands separating the deserts of Persia and of North-Western Afghanistan, and thence descends to Khaff. South of the Koh Bizh the hills sink so low that the district is completely open to attack from Bakharz. The population of Khaff and the hamlets surrounding it, consisting almost entirely of Taimuris, is reckoned at 4,000 to 5,000 families. They furnish 200 horse for the defence of the frontier, and could probably turn out 3,000 to 4,000 armed men. Besides the local force, a detachment of Hazaras from Mashad is usually stationed there. Khaff.

It is said to have more water, and consequently more cultivation, than Bakharz or Jam, but no grain is exported. Two-thirds of the population nomadise in the desert north and the mountains south of the desert, and have large flocks of sheep and goats.

Of late the Khaffis have been on bad terms with their Afghan neighbours, the Alizai and Noorzai of Subzwar, but their chiefs Lutf Ali and his brother Darvesh Ali Khan are known to be disaffected. Each in turn has been several times entrusted with the government of the district, which has in fact gone to the highest bidder, or the man by some accident in favor at the time, the result being that the two brothers have impoverished each other and the people, by yearly repeated bribes, and that neither has any motive left for gratitude towards the rapacious rulers of the country. Politics.

Anything worthy of the name of a fortification does not exist on the Persian border: the posts are mere ruined towers. Kahrez is said to have a good thick wall with mud towers, and to be stronger than the other villages. Khaff has a good wall and "ark," but there is no place with a rampart such as that of Herat, and consequently none that could resist the attacks of the artillery the Afghans now possess. Forts.

The districts of Khorassan that lie nearest the border line, and that would be first called upon to support a friendly force, or to aid in repelling an invading army, are Mashad, Turbat (Hadairi), Turshiz, Nishapoor, and Subzwar. Behind them westwards up to the province Irak the country is, in a military sense, a blank, offering no prospect of support to a defending force, and no obstacles to invasion. Districts that may be regarded as the interior line of frontier.

A review therefore of the condition of these districts is all that is necessary to complete an exposition of the military strength and resources of the Khorassan frontier.

The district of Mashad extends from the town north-west up the valley as far as Koochan, 48 miles; south to the Turbat Mashad.

border about 40 miles; west to the watershed of the Merabad range 20 miles; east to the Heri-Rood about 100 miles; north-east to Kelat 60 miles. An area of 6,000 to 7,000 square miles; of which 2,000 may be set down as level valley or plateau land, more or less culturable, where there are facilities of water. The remaining area includes high mountain ranges, rising to 8,000 or 9,000 feet, and showing but few culturable spots and a scanty herbage for cattle. Of the culturable tract a large portion, about one-third, lying east towards and along the banks of the Heri-Rood, is, owing to the ravages of the Turkomans, a complete desert, and the remainder is but sparsely populated.

The villages are small, scattered thinly over the plain on the spots most readily irrigated, and since the late famine but half peopled. A line drawn for 20 miles from Mashad in any direction across the plain would pass through perhaps six small walled hamlets, with an average of 40 houses each, and with a population of about 1,000 souls, two or three miles of irrigated land, five or six of unirrigated dependent on a precarious rainfall, and a large balance of stony desert or hill slope affording a scanty pasturage for sheep and goats.

The finest villages lie for the most part along the Kashaf Rood, and hidden in the barren ravines of the Merabad and Kelat ranges, where small perennial streams support a luxuriant growth of garden and vineyard, but little or no corn land. In Jaghark, the finest example of these "garden" villages, the grain raised is actually by about half insufficient for the population of the village. The villages on the Kelat or northern range are, in this respect, in a slightly better situation, for the hill slopes are there less steep and rocky, and yield grain crops dependent only on rainfall.

Routes. From Mashad to Herat the road is too well known to call for remark. It is practicable for wheeled carriage. Routes to and beyond the border have already been reported on; those connecting Mashad with the interior districts will come under observation in connection with those districts.

Resources. The district is divided into 16 *belooks* or sub-divisions (excluding Jam and Bakharz), of which number six may be set down as unproductive as regards capacity for supply of food grain, for they do not produce sufficient even for their own necessities; and it is unlikely that an invader would be able, under any circumstances, to get at their small stores, or at those of the peasantry generally. From the remaining 10 *belooks*, a grain-rent, amounting in all to 7,790 kharwars = 2,288½ tons, is taken, and this may be assumed to represent the surplus produce of the district, available at any season to any force having command of its resources. It is now applied to the maintenance of the Royal troops and the functionaries of Government, assignment holders, and Khans with their swarms of followers; the urban population, pilgrims, &c., and the purchasing consumers being supplied from distant sources. The grain assessment taken is that of the past year, and is not a fixed one.

Forage. Save in limited areas in the mountains no grasses are cultivated

or cut for forage in any part of Khorassan. In the moist hollows of the eastern part of the district in Sarjam, and the wide plain at the head of the Mashad Valley about Chinnaran and Radkan, there are pastures, on which large numbers of cattle and horses would find grazing, at certain seasons, in spring and after the late autumn rains. Horses are fed on chopped straw, wheat, or barley, mixed at times with dried lucerne, of which limited quantities only are raised. The supply of the former bears always some direct ratio to the price of grain. No very large supply could be calculated on in the vicinity of Mashad itself.

Wood.

In a country, the soil of which grows little spontaneously, save thistles, wood is naturally scarce and dear. The villages on the hill skirts furnish a limited supply grown for the market and cut down periodically, when of the requisite thickness. This supply is, however, strictly limited to the wants of the town and local consumption, and prices are never allowed to fall. The mountains to the north, at a distance of 20 to 30 miles, over the most impracticable roads, produce a stunted growth of juniper, the supply of which is, at present, only limited by cost of carriage.

Water.

Water is everywhere scarce, and often brackish, though not unwholesome. The Kashaf Rood is brackish below Mashad, as also are many of its feeders from the mountains. Along the main line of the valley, however, *kanats* and springs are so numerous that the largest force likely to be collected there would suffer no inconvenience. At Mashad itself there are numerous *kanats*, and water rises freely in wells, which are usually sunk to a depth of from 24 to 30 feet. The soil is alluvial to a depth of about 20 feet, consisting of small gravel and compact layers of coarse sand, underlying which is a bed of stiff clay.

The regular armed forces at the disposal of the Governor-General of Khorassan are not, at least at present, such as to occasion any suspicion of aggressive designs on the part of his Government, for they are, even for defence, below the point of the most moderate efficiency in numbers and organisation. He has, however, for defensive purposes, a powerful instrument in the armed population, which should, in time of need, be ready to his hand.

Population. Of town.

Failing all official assistance it was not possible to arrive at anything like a correct estimate of the population of the town and district. The following figures are based on calculations or estimates from personal observation in the town and many parts of the country, and are, perhaps, nearer the truth than the official returns, which had shortly before been compiled. For the work of enumeration would certainly be carelessly carried out, and the numbers probably wilfully exaggerated; 7,500 houses are said, on good authority, to be at present inhabited in Mashad, giving a population of 30,000 at four per house,—a sufficient allowance when loss from famine is considered. If to this estimate be added 5,000 to 6,000 pilgrims, a fluctuating population visiting Meshed yearly to the number of 50,000 to 60,000, a total of 35,000 to 36,000 is reached, probably slightly below the mark. The official

Persian census, as I was privately informed, estimates the inhabitants at 60,000. A mean between these, 45,000 may, I think, be accepted as nearly the correct figure.

Character.

During the rebellion of the Salar, son of Asaf-u-Dowla, in 1848, 15,000 armed citizens defended the town against the Hissam-u-Sultana's army and held out for several months. Allowing for losses during the famine and by emigration, perhaps 10,000 armed men might now be found to aid in the defence for a popular cause. All are, more or less, well armed, and they bear a high character for courage. Against the Afghan Sunnis, towards whom the Shiahs of Mashad evince a traditional feeling of hatred, a large amount of religious enthusiasm would probably be aroused, and would be enhanced by fear of a barbarous enemy. This fear would also extend itself to all classes having anything to lose by plunder, or from the desecration of the "shine," which would certainly ensue on an occupation by troops of the opposite sect.

Turkomans, if by chance they should ever appear again in the character of invaders, would, in the eyes of the Shiahs, stand in the same category with the Afghans. The two words, fear and hatred, sum up their feelings towards both races.

In the presence of a disciplined European enemy, who had paid his way through the country, and acquired a reputation for religious tolerance, it is very doubtful whether the citizens could be depended upon to offer any resolute opposition.

The whole class of merchants and petty shop-keepers, a very large one, would be furnished with a direct inducement to submission, and the fanaticism of the religious element has little of the uncompromising spirit that might be attributed to it. Given security of a continuance of their gains, the Mullahs and Mujtahids would, it is probable, speedily find good reasons for compromise with their duty as priests of the faith. It is, of course, possible that active opposition might be aroused against a Christian invader; but he would certainly have many more chances in his favour than an enemy, though Mahomedan, of the opposite sect.

Divisions of district.

Rural population.

The annexed statement gives the sub-divisions of the district, with the nominal revenue assessment from which some idea of the resources of the country may be derived, and a rough estimate of the population. Of the latter it was everywhere difficult to get good information, for a census is unknown, and the extent of the ravages of the late famine, either under-estimated or intentionally concealed. Certain approximate and exaggerated figures were usually given; these served as a basis, and it was possible, in the case of many *belooks*, to test and alter them by direct inquiry, and in others by comparison. A ride through a *belook* usually took one past 10 to 15 villages, the number of houses in which was almost exactly ascertainable. The number of villages also was known, with some certainty, and an average, secured by inquiry from grave error, which could be applied to the whole division, was thence attainable.

About one-third of the estimated rural population, or 17,000, may be reckoned as the number of able-bodied adult males; the

proportion of adults having been much raised by the famine, which, in many places, swept off almost the entire infant population. It is estimated that the district suffered the loss of half of its people, chiefly of the nomadic portion, the best fighting element.

The Kelat range, on the north of the district, is peopled, for the most part, by tribes of Toork origin, portions of the old Gerayli tribe of Jagatai Toorks, which is said to have come after the Tartar conquests, from the neighbourhood of Karshi, on the Oxus, and occupied the whole range east of Asterabad. Different tribes and sections are known as Jellayer, Beiyat, Choolai, Muzdorani, &c. The upper part of the valley or plain, and the mountains bounding it north and south, are held by Koords of the Zafferanloo and Kywanloo tribes—a portion of 100,000 families said to have been transported from Koordistan by Shah Abbas Sefavi. They are politically fractions of the larger tribes of Koochan and Bujnoord.

The mountaineers of the Merabad range on the south are chiefly "Ajam." In the plain about Mashad, to the north, east and south, the village population is much mixed, but the Ajam element probably predominates; there are also Koords and Toorks of various tribes, and some Eimaks, Hazaras, and Jamshidis. The nomads are chiefly of the latter tribes.

The village population, though not contented subjects, being connected by ties of religion and association with their Government, and also having much to fear from the presence in their country of an invading army, may be assumed to be at the disposal of the Government for the purposes of defence, and the same may be said of the nomads of Toork origin. The 2,000 or 3,000 Eimaks, Hazaras, Jamshidis, and Taimuris are chiefly Sunnis. Their adherence to the Persians in times of trouble would be at least very precarious; many of them, and those the leading men, are in constant communication with Herat.

Regular forces.

The regular forces on the eastern frontier are not employed in the general defence of the border, and would in fact be insufficient for it. Their head-quarters is Mashad, and they garrison from thence only two important points in the direction of the Tekkah Turkomans. The Afghan border has no posts for regular troops. The districts of Turbat, Turshiz, Nishapoor, and Subzwar are also destitute of garrisons. There are troops in Seistan, but they form a separate command, and are also kept at a very inconsiderable strength.

Between Subzwar and Teheran, 25 to 30 days' march from Mashad, there are no troops except a small force at Asterabad. Practically, therefore, the garrison of Khorassan is a diminutive, isolated force, entirely dependent for support on the scanty irregular levies of the country.

Infantry.

There were up to a late date three regiments of infantry, of about 800 men, stationed at Mashad. They had suffered somewhat in discipline and equipment from a lengthened absence from their head-quarters, but were nevertheless not an unfair sample

of the Persian army. The men ragged, ill-disciplined, and discontented, clamouring vainly for heavy arrears of pay. The officers, with one exception—an *elève* of St. Cyr—illiterate and ignorant of their profession.

The arm of the infantry is a heavy percussion musket with bayonet. By virtue of the prestige of their European organization and of a certain amount of discipline, they may be reckoned superior to untrained levies of Afghans or Turkomans.

Kelat.

A wing of one of the regiments, relieved about every three months, garrisons the natural fortress of Kelat, 80 miles north of Meshed by road. The station is an important one, but costs yearly the lives of several hundred men from its extreme unhealthiness. The regular garrison is necessary to prevent the capture of the place by the Turkomans, for the Toork peasantry are not only insufficient in numbers for the purpose, but also inclined rather to make common cause, as they have before frequently done, with the marauders.

Sarraks.

Another wing is detached to Sarraks, on the Merv road, and is nominally relieved every three months; but the difficulties of relief, through a level country, overrun by the Turkoman horse, is so great that it is usually deferred till such time as the relations of the Government with the tribes give promise of immunity from attack. Thus, a wing of the regiment of Maragha was left thirteen months in the little fort, without pay or issue of clothing, shoes, &c.

Though the garrison is always virtually imprisoned—the cavalry having been withdrawn through the impossibility of getting forage in the face of superior numbers of the enemy—the post is one that must at any cost be held, for much the same reasons that make the garrisoning of Kelat necessary, that is, to prevent the Turkomans from resettling on the banks of the Tejen, and gaining a new and advantageous base for their attacks.

Artillery.

There are usually about 20 light field guns in the "Ark" at Mashad, and, though the detachments and the horses are never exercised, it may be presumed that they would, in some manner, make their appearance with a force in the field. At Sarraks there are, I am informed, six light guns, mounted on the ramparts.

There was no other artillery, up to a late date, in the province, and no regular cavalry. Other accessories of a modern army are, of course, wanting.

Every foot soldier has a beast of burden of some sort, and is ready to march in any direction, with his own supplies, at short notice.

Irregular troops.

Compared with the regular, the irregular forces of Khorassan, and of the district under consideration, are formidable in numbers, and might prove, under favorable circumstances, an obstacle in the path of an invader. They are without discipline, but brave, nearly as well armed as the "Serbaz," composed, to some extent, of horse as well as of foot, thoroughly acquainted with the country, and having a stake in it that the "regular," recruited in a distant province, has not.

The old Eeljari system, under which each village was bound to

arm and furnish, when needed, one-third of its adult male population, has been abandoned in Khorassan; and the Government would probably resort, on occasions of pressing necessity, to a levy *en masse*. By this means a body of, perhaps, 10,000 armed peasantry might, under alarm of invasion, be collected. Of these, the best element would be the Koords from the north of the district.

The arms of the peasantry are the *shamkhal* (a long heavy rifled matchlock), fired from a fixed rest, having a range of about 400 yards. This, however, is usually carried by men mounted on *yaboos* or ponies. The *khirli*, a short handy rifled matchlock, with a range of 150 to 200 yards. Some have still only smooth-bore pieces. Matchlocks are rapidly giving place to percussion locks, and all the arms, now manufactured, have the latter. The proportion of European arms is very small, 200 to 300 of these levies are permanently employed in different parts of the border, at Moozderan, and the posts on the Sarraks road, and the Herat road; also 100 to 200 mounted "shamkhalchis," of whom a detachment was sent to Selstan during the late disturbances.

Cavalry.

The cavalry of the Mashad district consists chiefly of mercenaries. There are 1,000 Hazara horse of the tribe formerly occupying Kala Now, east of Herat, which was dispersed after the defeat of their chief, Karimdad Khan, by Yar Mohamad Khan, of Herat, and was subsequently induced by the Hissam-u-Sultana, after the evacuation of Herat in 1857, to accompany him to Mashad. About 2,000 families left Herat under Yusuf Khan, a relative of Karimdad Khan. They were given lands at Miahabad, north of Nishapoor. One thousand of them were entertained as border guards, and received a pay, rather irregularly doled out, of 4 tomans per mensem. They are well-armed and mounted and serviceable on ordinary occasions, but their fidelity, in the event of an Afghan invasion, is open to doubt.

About half the Hazara horse are constantly employed on the Afghan border under the sons of Yusuf Khan, but they are also liable to be called away to assist in the defence of the Bujnoord border against the Turkomans. There is also a body of Taimuri horse under two chiefs, Ali Murdan Khan and Ataoolla Khan. The Taimuris have been long settled in Khorassan. Their principal seat is Khaff. Those settled in the Mashad district furnish 500 horse for employment on the border.

There is a colony also of Jamshidis settled, since the last siege of Herat, at Kana Gosha near Mashad. They have lands given them by the Persian Government free from assessment, and are paid irregularly for their services, but neither chiefs nor followers appear to be contented and loyal subjects. They furnish 500 horse, and take their turn, according to the caprice of the Governor, for the time being, with the Hazaras and Taimuris in guarding the Persian border. They are equally well mounted and equipped with the former.

In addition to these, the Khans of Chenaran, Radkan, and Choolai, can furnish about a thousand horse, Koords and Toorks,

not so well mounted and equipped as the mercenaries, but probably more reliable; 200 or, perhaps, 300 mounted men from other parts would make up the tale of the available horsemen of the district.

The total of the irregulars that could be furnished by the district is thus—

10,000	Foot.
2,000	Eimak and Taimuri horse.
1,300	Local horse.
13,300	

This may appear a large proportion of so small an available population, but sufficient exertion would—special obstacles or influences being barred—no doubt raise the number. Almost every adult, in such communities, is able-bodied, and all are more or less inured to danger and accustomed to bear arms.

Forts. Every town and village in Khorassan is provided with defences of some sort, but these usually consist of a thin long curtain wall of mud, with short circular projections, for flanking defence; useless save for shelter from musketry. Many of the villages, especially to the north of the Mashad, have, however, a high raised mound popularly known as sites of "Atash Kaddas," or fire temples, large enough and high enough to form a most efficient "cavalier," and almost indestructible by direct fire. Many of them have strong cells or chambers that would serve as casemates. Such positions, improved and combined with a somewhat better temporary line of outer defence, would prove formidable obstacles to a force followed by light guns only.

The defences of Mashad are more formidable in appearance, and less so in reality, than those of the meanest villages in its vicinity; for they are of great extent and the weakest possible construction. A detailed description of them and of the fort of Amirabad, which may possibly be of interest, is annexed.

Amirabad is a fort, a few miles south of Chinnaran, once a stronghold of Mamesh Khan, Chief of the Zafferanloo Koords of that place. It was subsequently occupied by Reza Kooli Khan, Chief of Koochan, in 1832, and reconstructed on somewhat European principles. It is the most formidable work of the kind in Khorassan, is in good repair, and on the route to Koochan, the granary of Mashad, a district at which an invader would at once strike to secure his supplies.

District of Turbat-i-Haidari. Turbat-i-Haidari or Turbat-i-Isa Khan, the chief town and seat of Government of the district of Turbat, stands about in its centre. It is distant from Mashad 92 miles.

„	Nishapoor	80 to 84 miles.
„	Turshiz	60 „
„	Khaff	80 „

Routes. The road from Mashad to Turbat is rough and hilly, but is traversed by caravans of laden camels. It crosses the ramifica-

tions of the south-eastern or Merabad spur of Elburz. Troops from Mashad would reach Turbat in three marches.

From Turbat to Nishapoor, a route frequently traversed by caravans bound to and from Herat, as being more direct, and avoiding the tolls and exactions of Mashad; the road passes over broken barren plains and by an easy pass over the Koh Soorkh. There are villages on the route, and there is ample water, but no caravanserais. Troops would reach it in three days, the time occupied by caravans.

From Turbat to Turshiz there is a road practicable for camels, and sometimes in favourable seasons taken by caravans bound for the west. The distance is covered in two long marches, or seven or eight fursakhs. As to its position, I found a strange discrepancy in the different available authorities: Dr. Bellew places it about north-west of Turbat; the latest map from the Surveyor General's Office about west-south-west; the *Gazetteer*, north-east. The latter is, of course, incorrect, and, as it is said to lie on the direct road from Turbat to Turoni, Biarjomand, and Shahrood, the position given on the map is probably nearly the right one, though the town should, perhaps, be placed further north than it is.

Natural features.

The north-west of the district is a broken tract separated from the Nishapoor district by the Koh Mesh. The north and north-east portions are broken up by spurs of the Merabad range, which, to the east, rises into a high snow-clad mass, separating it from Bakherz. The central and south-east tracts are broken and hilly, and the southern and western open and desert plain. The main road from Afghanistan crosses the Heri-Rood at Ghorian, passes over a low portion of the main south-eastern range, and thence, crossing the Karat Pass into the Khaff plain, leads to Turbat. This is the only suitable line of advance for a force, directed on any point, south of Mashad, and would probably be taken by an Afghan army, seeking to establish itself on any point of the line of communication between Mashad and Seistan. This was the route traversed by Colonel Taylor and his party on their from Herat in 1858.

Condition of district.

In the days of Ishak Khan Karai, in the early part of the century, the district of Turbat was a flourishing semi-independent state with a large revenue, a fine population, and considerable trade; there has since been a gradual decline, the result of rebellion, oppression, misgovernment, and continual persecution from the Turkomans of the Murghab and Merv. After the failure of the attempt to subdue the Tekkah Turkomans, their ravages were continued with redoubled boldness and vigour. They were seldom, it is said, absent from some part of the district; one band of plunderers relieving another, and made the devastated country a base for distant forays on Turshiz and the Ghainat. The famine found the country in this state, and nearly completed its depopulation.

I was unable to visit the district, and from causes that have been before referred to, failed to obtain any exact data on which

to base an estimate of its population and resources, but the following approximations are deduced from some general information, and I have reason to believe that they are really approximate.

Population and grain produce.

The population is said to have decreased by about one-third from the effects of the famine. Large numbers of Belooch nomads, who used to occupy a tract known as the Jangal-i-Turbat, in the south of the district, have, under pressure of Turkoman ravages and famine, entirely deserted it. The village population, the Karai Toorks, have abandoned many of the outlying and scantily watered lands, and yet do not fill the larger villages save the two principal—Abdoolabad and Turbat,—which have maintained, through immigration, nearly their normal numbers. The Karai battalion of the regiment of Turbat-o-Turshiz is also with difficulty recruited, and kept up to its proper strength.

The soil of the valleys, however, is fertile, and the production of grain exceeds the consumption. In the height of the famine even the Governor of Turbat was able to supply, to some extent, the greater necessities of Mashad. This result comes probably directly from the reduction of population, and more especially from the rise in the proportion of adult males due to the famine; and natural increase will in time restore the balance, but it may be assumed that for the next few years the country being meantime, as it is, in a tranquil state, and continuing freefrom Turkoman visitations, there will be some surplus produce.

By an old estimate made subsequently to the halcyon days of Ishak Khan, but long before the famine, I find that the tribal population, excluding the Belooch, amounted to 8,000 families. Half the population, being, it is said, destroyed by the famine, there is left a balance of 4,000 families. One thousand may be added for the purely urban population, merchants, and others, giving a present population of about 25,000 souls. Of these about 5,000 may be set down as grain-producers, who at the utmost would produce one-half of the quantity estimated as the surplus produce of the Mashad district; 3,000 or 4,000 may also be put down as the number of irregular troops that a levy *en masse* would bring forward.

Condition of tribe of Karai.

The chiefs of the Karai appear to have lost their former pretensions to independence, and it may be assumed that, in common with the rural population of the interior districts, the Karai would—if no special unfavourable influences were at work—be available for defence in the event of invasion. The Karai are still accounted a warlike tribe, and the regiment, recruited from amongst them, bears a high reputation; 200 or 300 men are mounted for border defence, but the peasantry have few horses. Neither the town of Turbat, nor Abdoolabad, nor any of the smaller villages, appears to be defended in any other than the ordinary mode.

District of Turshiz.

The district of Turshiz is in much the same condition as Turbat, but its production of food grains and its population are less.

It was, till very lately, as much subject to Turkoman ravages,

and suffered also severely in the famine. The nomadic population, a large proportion, was dispersed southward towards Seistan and Beloochistan. Some quantity of grain, nevertheless, found its way thence to Nishapoor and Mashad in the last season of famine, which was in the north the most severely felt. It may be assumed, therefore, that for some years to come, there will be an available surplus of produce, though a very small one.

There is a road across the desert from Turshiz direct to Shahrood, about 200 miles, which is occasionally taken by caravans, and by which the troops from Seistan lately returned to Teheran.

Nishapoor. Extent, boundaries and general aspect.

The Nishapoor district extends in a direct line from the town, due north, for about 40 miles, south about 40 miles, east about 20 miles, west to the borders of Subzwar about 20 miles. The northern boundary line runs up in an acute angle into the mountains, forming a triangle with the plain of Nishapoor as a base. On the east side of the triangle the boundary is formed by the watershed of the Merabad or Nishapoor range, known also locally as the Koh Mashad. The highest portion of the ridge, rising to 10,000 or 11,000 feet, bears about north-east from the town of Nishapoor. It falls away, on the eastern boundary of the district, into the plain of Bewajan, and at the apex of the triangle, into the Sultan Maidan plateau. It is the drainage of this fine mass of mountains that supports almost the entire district, and might, with proper management, restore it to its former prosperity.

The west side of the triangle crosses alternately bare ridges and barren strips of plain, the lower portions of the southern spurs and valleys of the Merabad range: beyond it lies the districts of Bam, Sheffiabad, and Jouven.

The southern boundary is formed by a low barren, rocky, isolated ridge, running nearly due east and west, known as the Koh Soorkh, boyond which lies the desert and district of Turshiz.

The eastern boundary is formed by the declining spurs of the Merabad range, the Bewajan plain, and the broken country south of it. The western by a low barren ridge, dividing the Nishapoor plain from that of Subzwar. The triangle forming the northern portion of the district includes roughly 800 square miles, of which about two-thirds consist of mountains, barren and rocky. wooded, in parts only, with juniper scrub, and furnishing what would, in any other country, be considered the poorest pasturage for sheep and goats. There are a few spots favourably situated, that would vie with the greenest meadows of countries with which nature has dealt more kindly, and a few nooks in the lateral glens of the main valleys, retired deep in the recesses of the range, that charm the eye, with masses of verdant orchards, groves, and vineyards rising high up the terraced mountain slopes; but the general aspect is barren, parched, and forbidding in the extreme. The remainder, the south-western portion of the area, consists of barren wastes expanding gradually to the plain, as the rocky spurs and ridges enclosing them subside.

The *belooks* comprised in this portion of the district, of which some further details are given elsewhere, are (1) Sar-i-Vilayat, (2) Marousk, (3) Bar-i-Madan, and a portion of Taghan Koh.

The southern portion of the district is an undulating plain, bounded as before mentioned, having an area of about 2,000 square miles. The upper or north-eastern section, which the drainage of the Merabad range traverses and fertilises, about one-fourth of the whole, is fairly cultivated, and in spite of drought and famine, still covered with villages. In its centre, distant 10 to 12 miles from the base of the mountains, stands the town, with its circle of gardens, groves, and ruins. It is famed as the seat of population of the Peshdadian, Arab, and Seffavian times, but the elements of its former prosperity do not appear now to exist. There are no relics older than the Arab period, and it seems probable that its resources were first developed by the energy and skill which that race has exhibited wherever the battle of human subsistence was to be fought under the most adverse conditions that nature could oppose. The energy appears to have entirely departed with the Arab blood, and probably much of the old skill is lost also.

The lower or south-eastern section is a sandy saline waste, sloping down to the Kal Shor or salt stream, which drains it into the "Kavir," and up southward to the Koh Soork ridges, which extend, with a breadth of 10 to 15 miles south, to the desert. It has many villages scattered over its surface, and enclosed in the hollows of Koh Soorkh. They are generally small and poor, but a few, having exceptional advantages of water, are populous and prosperous. The most productive village of the whole district, for instance, being situated in the desert.

The road from Nishapoor to the capital is too well-known to need comment. It is level thoughout and practicable for any wheeled carriage. Supplies are scarce at some points, and the water is brackish and scanty at many, but there are no serious obstacles to the passage of the largest force.

Routes.

From Nishapoor to Mashad there are two roads also well known. From Nishapoor north-west, through the Koord districts to the Caspian provinces, is one of the oldest trade routes in Persia. The commerce of China and India with the west was probably, in the remotest times, confined to this route. It is now neglected and untraversed, and it would be possible to pass through the country without witnessing a single evidence of its former existence. The towns that formerly marked the stages are now in ruins, and their names almost forgotten. From Nishapoor the line passes north-west, over an undulating plain, for 90 to 100 miles to Isferayeen, the site of an Arab town, near which are some ruins bearing the name of Sabah, probably of far more ancient date. It then passes by a gap into a long valley or chain of plateaux, and gently descending, reaches in 100 miles the gorge of the Gurgan, whence a march of 80 miles across a verdant plain leads to the shores of the Caspian.

The itineraries of Isidore of Charax and Istakhri give the

stages on the route, which still bear the same names; and the caravanserais, built by Shah Abbas Sefavi, stand to the present day. As a natural passage through the very rugged and unbroken chain of the Elburz, the gorge of the Gurgan is unequalled, and affords every facility for the passage of an army, or for the construction of a railway.

South of Nishapoor is the road already mentioned to Turbat and Turshiz, and east to Herat.

Annexed is a list of the divisions of the district, with a few details regarding them. In a rapid passage of four days through the district, it was difficult to obtain exact information regarding its resources and population, or to form more than a rough estimate. The amount of revenue noted, which is the nominal land revenue assessment with water-rates only, is hardly a fair test of the resources of the country, for the people probably pay without difficulty, though not without complaint, one-fourth more in the shape of fees and illegal exactions in cash and in kind. APPENDIX I. Divisions of district.

By their own account the proportion would stand much higher.

The figures given may, as regards population, be relied on as a fair approximation, above rather than below the truth. They have been arrived at in a manner before described. The elements composing the population are the same as in the Mashad district, but stand in different proportions. Population.

The Koords form a smaller portion of the whole, and the Toorks predominate over the Ajam, Tajik, or Persians. The nomadic element and the town population are both inconsiderable.

In the extreme north of the district, in the mountains, are the Amanloo Koords, a thievish tribe, whose numbers were much reduced by the famine. They are chiefly nomads, said to number now about 2,000 tents, but other sections of the tribe appear in Koochan and Chinnaran.

The village population are Beiat Toorks, once a powerful tribe, whose chief seat is Nishapoor.

In the plains the Beiyat element is much mixed with the Ajam. They appear to stand in the proportion of about five to four.

There are in different parts of the district about 1,000 tents of Belooch nomads.

The town population has a basis of mixed "Beiyat" and "Ajam" origin, with the usual agglomeration of strangers.

Under altered conditions of Government and improved communications with the grain-producing tracts to the north and west, the Nishapoor district might become prosperous by the cultivation of such valuable staples of commerce as silk and cotton; support a considerable population, and pay somewhat more than a nominal revenue; but it can never be relied on as a source of food supply. Even now, with its diminished population, the produce, which will be proportionally larger than before, barely suffices. For instance, I found on inquiry that the amount of the out-turn of wheat of Iskhabad, said to be the best village of the district, was 800 kharwars (of 650 lbs.), not more than one-ninth in excess of the quantity required to feed the 150

households of the village. The season also was a favorable one, the crops were abundant, the only complaint being of want of lands.

The surplus that would be in the market, and available yearly, I estimate at 10,000 kharwars.

This may be expected to decrease slightly with the increase of cultivation of silk and cotton for the Russian market, but not to any great extent; for there can be no considerable increase in the production of these staples, until a vast improvement has been made in existing communications with the corn-growing districts.

Forage, wood and water.

I could hear of no extensive natural pastures in the district. In the mountains there are a few green oases, and the barren slopes are in spring covered with a thin growth of herbage fit only for flocks. Horses and cattle are fed on chopped straw. Wood is as scarce as in Mashad, and water in the wider valleys and in the plain to the south scarcely more plentiful.

Forces.

Nishapoor and Subzwar formerly furnished an infantry regiment to the Shah's army. As a mark of special favour after the return of His Majesty from Khorassan, eight years ago, the men were allowed to return to their homes, and have not since been called out. In place of the regiment, Nishapoor furnishes a body of 200 horse, chiefly of the Beiyat tribe, one-half of which is stationed permanently in Seistan.

The Eeljari system having been abandoned, there are no regular levies; but it is probable that 4,000 or 5,000 armed villagers could, at any time, be speedily collected, and a levy *en masse* of adult able-bodied males might produce about 20,000 to 25,000 men. All are more or less efficiently armed, and they have not yet lost their warlike instincts.

The Beiyats have some remnant of tribal cohesion, a good deal of pride of race, and a good "physique." If their allegiance were secured, they might prove useful auxiliaries to a regular force. There appear to be no local chiefs in the district likely to take a lead, or to possess any extensive influence with the people. The Amanloo Koords would probably follow the leading of the Koord chief of Koochan.

Every village in Nishapoor is defended in the usual manner, but of late these defences have been allowed to fall in disrepair; for the country has, for some years, been free from Turkoman ravages from Sarjam and the east, and for a long period safe towards the west.

The town of Nishapoor has a weak wall, with four sides of about half mile each, and four gates, defended by round towers. The interior is only half peopled.

Subzwar. Extent and general aspect.

Of the Subzwar district I saw little, having passed to the north of it. It is bounded on the north by the watershed of the Jagatai-Jouven Hills; south by the Koh Mesh and the Turshiz District; east by Nishapoor; and west by the Kavir and the Kal Shor, the salt stream draining the Jah Jerm plain. Its length is about 75 miles, and breadth about 40 miles, giving an area of 5,000

square miles. The northern portion is fertile, but it lacks the natural streams of Nishapoor. The barren Jagatai range supplies no perennial streams, and but few springs. Cultivation in the plain is carried on entirely by aid of *kanats*. The southern half of the district and a great part of the western portion is a dry barren plain, in parts saline, and growing only scattered tufts of herbage. Across the Kal Shor the country rises to the foot of the Koh Mesh.

These mountains have a rugged outline, and reach to a considerable height from 2,500 to 3,000 feet above the plain. They are said to be rich in minerals, especially copper and borax. The Russian geologist, Goebel, of Khanikoff's party explored them, but the results of his labours do not appear to have seen the light.

Routes. The town of Subzwar lies on the main road from the capital to Meshed. Northward a good road leads, over the south-eastern spurs of the Jagatai-Jouven range, into the plain of Jouven, and thence to Isferayeen.

South-east, 70 to 80 miles distant, is Turshiz. This route is taken by caravans bound to and from Herat in favourable seasons.

Appendix C. Division of district. Annexed is a list of the *belooks*, or divisions of the district, with some particulars regarding them.

Population. The estimate of the population given is based on averages from a certain number of villages passed through, and may be accepted as an approximation. For the northern portion of the district, which is not entirely dependent on *kanats*, and where consequently the severity of the famine was mitigated, an allowance of five souls per house has been made; in the more barren tract to the south, four only.

The nomads are Koords, Bélooch, and some Toorks. They are few in number, and appear to have no tribal connections. The town population is large in proportion to that of Nishapoor, and there is more life and activity in the streets.

The Ajam or Tajik element predominates over all others in the village population. Next to it apparently is the Arab, which here reaches the limit of its extension to the north-east, for no Arabs are to be found in Mashad or the Koord country, while westwards and southwards they increase in numbers.

Since the regiment of Nishapoor was disbanded, the district has furnished no regular troops. The peasantry are, as usual, armed, and the Arab element especially has a high reputation for warlike qualities; 8,000 or 10,000 men would, no doubt, be produced by a levy *en masse*.

Food-grain produce. As regards capability for production of food, Subzwar is far below Nishapoor, having inferior advantages of water. The soil is fertile and yields an abundant return, but irrigation is indispensable, and every drop of water must be extracted from the soil at great cost of labour, and with a result at least precarious.

The physical conditions of production of Nishapoor are in fact here exaggerated, and the moral qualities, that are necessary to ensure success in the struggle, are again wanting to the people. If the present petty trade with the Caspian continues to increase,

it is possible that private enterprise will in time effect what the Government of the country should hasten to do, even in its own interests, and that the grain producers of the districts will turn their hands to the culture of silk and cotton, and find their food brought to them from districts where it can be raised more cheaply than in their own. In any case, even if the breadth of wheat that is now sown be not reduced, the district should be put out of the list of grain-producing tracts. Forage and wood are more deficient, if possible, than in the other districts of the border. The pastures are confined to a few spots at the base of the hills, and a natural growth of wood is unknown.

Jouven.

The small district, known as Jouven or Jagatai-Jouven, was formerly held by a family of native chiefs of Toork race, and of some renown. In the reign of Fath Ali Shah, Allah Yar Khan, of Jagatai, held Mazinan, and a considerable tract of country around it. He was defeated by that Sovereign, and died at Teheran. Since then the chiefs have been deprived of their possessions, and the present head of the family is serving in Seistan with 100 horsemen of Jagatai. The government of the district is administered by a nominee of the Governor-General of Khorassan, but it may be deemed by position and connections an appanage of the Subzwar Government or district.

Extent, boundaries, and general aspects.

Its position and productive capabilities give it an importance that it could not otherwise claim.

On the south it is separated from Subzwar by a high ridge, known as the Koh-i-Jagatai Jouven, the highest peak of which, known as the Koh-i-Zar, rises to 5,000 or 6,000 feet. The ridge extends from the bank of the Kal Shor into the Nishapoor district in a south-easterly direction.

It is formed for the most part of trap rocks overlying marls and clays. In its glens are many springs, which water a succession of small hamlets, with extensive gardens, vineyards, and groves of mulberry, raised for silk cultivation. The soil of the glens and slopes of disintegrated trap and rich marls is most fertile.

To the north the district is bounded by a low rocky ridge running nearly due east and west across the great plain that lies between the main ridge of the Elburz and its rocky outer barriers, and extends with varying width, but in an unbroken level, from Bostam to Nishapoor. At this point it has a width of not less than 40 miles. Beyond the dividing ridge is the district of Isferayeen, which, in common with Jouven, drains west and south past the town of Jah Jerm into the Kal Shor, and thence to the "Kavir."

The width of the Jouven plain at this point is about 20 miles. On the west the plain is bounded by the Kal Shor and Jah Jerm, and on the east by the petty districts of Bam and Seffiabad and by Nishapoor.

Its total length is about 55 miles, giving an area of 1,100 square miles, of which about one-sixth, the extreme southern portion, is mountainous. The remaining area consists of plain, sloping gently to its centre and to the west, with a bare and barren

surface, but a fertile alluvial soil, needing only irrigation to render it extremely productive. The hill skirts to the south, and a narrow strip of country following the central line of depression are now alone cultivated; but there were evidences, in the lines of old *kanats*, that in former days a great deal that is now waste was under the plough. The general elevation of the plain is about 4,000 feet, which is sufficient to give it a good climate. Being dependent on artificial irrigation, the district suffered severely during the famine, and the villages, save a few in the mountains, have lost, it is reckoned, half their population.

Condition, population, and production of food-grains.

Under present conditions, with a comparatively good supply of water, a large proportion of adult males and a very fertile soil, Jouven produces grain enough to supply to some extent the necessities of Jah Jerm, Sabzwar, and Nishapoor, as well as considerable quantities of silk and cotton; but a continuance of the demand for these staples and improved communications, will tend to reduce this surplus, and even a few years may find the necessitous districts compelled to send further for their supplies. The people themselves will, however, continue in ordinary seasons to raise enough for their own consumption, for their favourable climate and good soil enable them to sow unirrigated lands with advantage. During last season I found that in many villages the unirrigated sowings were ten times the extent of the irrigated, and there was evidence of a good crop.

The district is divided into two *belooks*—Jagatai and Nikah. The first includes all the villages along the central depression from Ferishiyan, on the Jah Jerm border, to the barren plain separating Jagatai from Nikah, which lies 20 miles east of it, and those on the skirts of the mountains, numbering in all 20 inhabited villages.

Among these is Jagatai, formerly a considerable town in the gorge of a glen, descending from the Koh Zar, and the seat of the Khans of Jouven. It has now only 100 houses. A small stream from the Koh Zar flows through it.

The *belook* of Nikah includes all the villages of the eastern portion of the central depression, numbering 30, now inhabited. It has very great capabilities, evidenced by remains of large villages now ruined, and of numerous *kanats*.

A rough estimate of the population, from the average of 17 villages passed through, gives 2,050 houses, and a population of 10,250, of which about 2,500 may be reckoned as adult males. There may be also 200 to 300 tents of Belooch nomads, making a total population of about 11,000.

The villagers are Toorks, principally of the Ghilitchi tribe, calling themselves also Jagatai. They are reputed to be warlike and well-armed. They furnish now no regular soldiers, but have 800 Tafangchis told off, and paid a small sum in grain for service in case of Turkoman incursions.

The surplus grain produce for the past year from an estimate calculated from the average of a numbar of villages, amounts to about 2,000 kharwars, a little above the average of other seasons.

The revenue of the district paid in cash is 4.000 tomans. The production of silk is estimated at 100 kharwars, most of which is consumed at home; men, women and children being commonly clothed in silk. There is also a considerable trade with Russia in silkworm eggs.

Position. The position of Jouven is an important one, for through it will lie, when the country becomes more secure from Turkoman incursions, the main road from Shahrood and the west to Nishapoor, Mashad and the east, and the old trade route, before mentioned, from Nishapoor to the Caspian, traversed it from north to south. Either in Jouven or in Isferayin also would be the position or base of any force defending the Gurgan Pass from attack from the north.

Routes from Jagatai. To the south-east, a distance of 90 miles by road over a level plain, on which, save for about 20 miles there is ample water, lies Nishapoor. To the north-west 40 miles across a barren plain deficient in water, but in which wells could no doubt be dug without difficulty, is Jah Jerm, a large town during the period of the Arab occupation, now a mere village.

Thirty-five miles north, over a level plain, crossed by one low ridge, is Isferayin, and 10 miles beyond, slightly to the west, the Derband-i-Hissar, the pass leading to the Gurgan.

West, over a level plain or series of plateaux, deficient in water and with few villages, distant 140 miles by road, is Shahrood. West for 25 miles and then south-west 20 miles, along the banks of the Kal Shor, is a good road leading to the present highway, whence Subzwar may be reached in two marches.

There are three direct roads to Subzwar over the Jagatai Range; but that by Manida and Feroomad (in the Bostam district) is alone passable for laden mules. The other two are little better than foot-paths, though horsemen pass occasionally.

NOTE.—Appendices E. and F. give respectively a summary of information regarding resources, &c., and prices of food grains, &c., in principal towns of border, which may be useful for reference.

APPENDIX A.

RURAL POPULATION OF MASHAD AND REVENUE ASSESSMENT.

Name of Belook.	Revenue.		Estimated Population.	REMARKS.
	Cash.	Grain.		
	Tomans.	*Kharwars.*		
Ardamah -	3,526	106	5,000	Comprising a number of glens in the mountains, 15 to 20 miles south-west of Mashad, with about 12 villages. There is little irrigated corn land, but a good supply of water in the glens. Population, 1,000 families of Toork and Ajam descent.

Rural Population of Mashad and Revenue Assessment.—*cont.*

Name of Belook.	Revenue.		Estimated Population.	Remarks.
	Cash.	Grain.		
	Tomans.	*Kharwars.*		
Biwajan -	1,300	150	1,500	A high barren plateau south of Mashad and on the borders of Nishapoor, with 16 or 18 small villages, south of Sharifabad, on the Mashad road. The people are principally Ajam (that is of Persian descent), with many Karai Toork nomads, 300 families.
Miyan Vilayut	2,300	1,700	20,000	North-west of Mashad, comprising whole width of the plain nearly to Chinnaran. This is the most populous and best cultivated tract in the district, having over 100 villages. It suffered much, however, during the famine. The people are chiefly Ajam and Toork, with about 1,000 tents of Taimoori nomads. Population, 4,000 families. A large number of the villages are the property of the "Shrine."
Shaudiz -	4,015	195	6,500	A belook of 11 fine villages in the mountains, 20 to 30 miles south of Mashad, bordering on Nishapoor. Has about 1,300 families.
Chenaran -	3,700	1,190	9,000	Chenaran, 30 to 35 miles north-west of Mashad. Formerly a large town and the principal seat of the Zafferanloo Koords, now a decaying village, with about 50 houses inhabited out of 800. A belook of about 30 villages and hamlets, with a population of 1,800 families, almost entirely Zafferanloo Koords and nomads; 200 mounted men.
Radkan -	4,680	660	7,000	40 to 50 miles off Mashad; consists of 10 to 14 villages lying at the foot of the Kelat range, the principal with 500 houses. The population in all amounts to about 1,500 families of Kywanloo Koords. They have fine gardens, corn land, and pastures; 300 men mounted.
Gulmakan -	2,500	100	2,000	A belook of 13 small villages on the Mirabad range, 30 to 40 miles west of Mashad. The people are about half Koord nomads of Hamzakanloo tribe; the village population are known as Tajiks, the only people so called in the province.
Sarjam -	1,400	680	1,500	A fine plateau south of Mashad, at head of Jam Valley, with 13 small villages. It is much exposed to Turkoman ravages. There are now not more than 300 families, chiefly nomads.
Tabatkan -	4,870	1,740	10,000	A belook of about 40 villages and hamlets, comprising some fertile valleys of the Kelat range, north and east of Mashad, and extending to the Heri-Rood. Moozderan and Ak Derband, and the lower course of the Kashaf Road, are included in it. A consider-

Rural Population of Mashad and Revenue Assessment.—*cont.*

Name of Belook.	Revenue.		Estimated Population.	Remarks.
	Cash.	Grain.		
	Tomans.	*Kharwars.*		able quantity of corn finds its way thence to the Mashad market. The people are Koords of various tribes, Jellayer, Beiyat, and Moozderani.
Darzaf -	3,100	870	6,000	A belook of 18 villages on the southern slopes of the Kelat Range, and about 50 miles north-west of Mashad, and south of Deregez.
Pazooshk *or* Choolai.	1,500	210	2,500	A belook of eight villages, held by Rahim Khan of Choolai, in the mountains north-west of Mashad, 200 mounted men, chiefly Choolai Toorks, calling themselves of the Jagatai race. 500 families and tents.
Jaghark -	1,615	40	3,000	A belook, 18 to 20 miles west of Mashad, consists of four or five large villages in the glen of the Mirabad Range, through which passes the Darood route from Nishapoor to Mashad. The population are chiefly Ajam. They lost half their number during the famine, and are still dependent to a great extent on the sale of fruit.
Isjit -	500	30	500	A village and hamlets in the Mirabad Range, west of Mashad.
Kahoo -	675	- -	600	A cluster of hamlets in a glen near the last.
Firayzi -	300	15	500	A glen, 8 miles south of Chinnaran. The villages inhabited by Zafferanloo Koords lie high up on the Mirabad Range. The people have little corn land, having been, even before their numbers were reduced by famine, dependent on the sale of fruit.
Akhloomad -	400	200	700	A wild glen in the mountains west of Chinnaran, reached through 7 or 8 miles of winding narrow gorge, shut in by precipitous heights. It was the stronghold of Mamesh Khan, a noted chief of the Zafferanloo Koords. The village and hamlets have about 150 houses, with fine gardens and orchards on the terraced slopes of the glen, and some corn land on the summits of the Mirabad Range, yielding, in good seasons, 1,500 kharwars, more than sufficient for the present population. Before the famine there were 600 houses, and a large part of the people were dependent on supplies of grain from without, paid for by sale of fruit.

Revenue.—The land revenue assessment for past year amounted to 56,000 tomans (of Rupees 4) and 7,790 kharwars of grain= about 2,000 tons.

Surplus grain.—The produce of grain in excess of the requirements of the producers I estimate at 2,000 tons in round numbers.

Population.—Rural population - - - 76,000
Taimuri Nomads - - - - 5,000
Nomads of other tribes and villages not included in any belook - - - 5,000

Total in round numbers - 86,000

APPENDIX B.

BELOOKS OF NISHAPOOR.

No.	Name of Belook.	Estimated Revenue.	Estimated Population.	REMARKS.
1	Sar-i-Vilayat-i-Nishapoor.	Tomans. 3,000	8,000	A small mountainous tract, forming a section of the range dividing the Jouven and Mashad plains and districts, 40 to 60 miles north-east from Nishapoor. It has six principal villages, and a population of about 2,000 houses. The people are Toorks of the Beiyat tribe, speaking Toorki and Persian. Its productions are wheat, barley, and millet, chiefly grown on deyma (unirrigated) lands. It is watered by a small stream known as the Rod-i-Haidari. The hills have no forest, but afford pasturage for flocks. Towards the north of the belook is a fine plateau with a village known as Sultan Maidan, across which lies the most direct route to Mashad from the west.
2	Marousk -	1,000	400	A mountainous tract south of the last, including the upper part of a valley known as Marousk, draining into the Nishapoor plain and the enclosing hills, two long ridges known as the Koh Madan east, and Benaloo west. It is the chief seat of the Amanloo Koords. There are four villages, having now only 100 inhabited houses. Before the famine they numbered 1,000. Besides the usual grain crops, some rice is produced.
3	Bar Madan -	1,200	2,800	A rough broken tract, lying to the west of Marousk, with five villages. It has about 600 houses of Beiat Toorks and 100 of miners—descendants, it is said, of Badakshis, imported to work the turquoise mines. The soil is dry and unfertile. Grain produce greatly dependent on rain. The mountains are barren, rocky, and furnish but scanty pasturage.

Belooks of Nishapoor—*cont.*

No.	Name of Belook.	Estimated Revenue.	Estimated Population.	Remarks.
		Tomans.		
4	Taghan Koh -	3,000	8,000	A barren tract of mountain and plain stretching from Bar-i-Madan to the borders of Subzwar, including the upper part of the Jouven Plain and spurs of the Jagatai Hills. Its population and productions are quite disproportionate to its extent. There are nine principal villages, numbering 2,000 families of Beiyats. Cotton and grain crops are produced. Irrigation is from artificial streams.
5	Tahat Julga-i-Taghan Koh.	- -	4,000	A tract of level plains south of the last and of the town, touching Subzwar to the west. The soil is saline but fertile; where irrigated by karez, yields good crops of cotton and grain. The villagers are mixed Toorks and Ajams, with some few families of Koords. They number 1,000 families.
6	Ishkabad -	3,000	8,000	An extensive, barren, unhealthy tract of plain lying to the south-west of Nishapoor, traversed by two ridges of the Koh Mesh known as Chashma-Yakoot, and Kamr-i-Sufed. The soil is saline and unfertile. There are in all 32 villages and hamlets. I estimate the population at 2,000 families.
7	Rewand -	5,000	12,000	The belook in which lies the town of Nishapoor. A level tract, 10 to 15 miles from the skirts of the Mirabad Range, formerly well irrigated by numerous karez. It has still many fine villages, watered by a stream flowing from Benaloo known as the "Davir." Cotton and tobacco are grown in addition to the usual grain crops. The people are Beiyat and Ajam. I estimate the number of villages at 40, and families at 3,000.
8	Darb-i-Kazi -	10,000	24,000	A fine tract to the east of Mashad, lying along the hill skirts, irrigated by kanats and streams from the mountains. Besides grain, cotton, tobacco, and silk are produced. There were said to have been formerly 1,000 villages. The population now consists of 6,000 families, chiefly Ajam.
9	Zabarkhan -	3,000	8,000	A belook comprising a number of villages in the ravines of the main range of Mirabad, north-west of the last. It is watered by the Farrukh and Boozkhan streams. The people are Beiyat, Toork, and Ajam, and number 2,000 families. Silk, tobacco, and cotton are produced.
10	Belook-i-Darood	3,000	8,000	A large valley in the extreme east of the district, stretching from the north-east to the south-east corner, and watered by the Darood stream. The population, 2,000 families, Ajam and

Belooks of Nishapoor—*cont.*

No.	Name of Belook.	Estimated Revenue.	Estimated Population.	Remarks.
		Tomans.		Beiyat, is dependent to a great extent on the produce of gardens and vineyards.
11	Oordkish	5,000	12,000	A broken level and sandy tract, south-west of Darood and south of Nishapoor, bordering on Mashad and Turshiz, watered by the Darood and Khour streams. The arable lands lie along the streams, and produce cotton and tobacco in addition to grain. Population 3,000 families, Ajam and Beiyat.
		37,200	95,200	

Revenue.—There was nothing about which it was more difficult to obtain exact information than the amount of produce and the revenue of any district. Direct questions at once aroused suspicions. The above estimates of the cash assessment of the various belooks were either obtained from reliable sources or estimated roughly by comparison with other belooks. The total cash revenue, with *abiana*, amounts to 42,000 tomans, which I learned would be with difficulty realised. The revenue in kind was valued at 18,000 tomans.

Surplus grain.—The quantity of grain produced is little more than suffices for the consumption of the producers, and with the extension of cotton and silk culture, which is probable, will further diminish. For the present, that is for some years, it may be calculated that about 10,000 kharwars will be the surplus. A large quantity goes to the Mashad market.

Population.—The populations of the various belooks, with exception of two, were estimated by a competent authority, but are still little better than rough guesses, for there has never been any attempt at a census. In one or two instances I have made reductions from personal observation and computation. The famine having been felt with the utmost severity (its traces being still most evident), an allowance of four persons to a house or tent is the utmost perhaps that should be made. This gives in round numbers, 95,000 as the village population + 12,000 nomads + 5,000 townspeople = 112,000.

APPENDIX C.

Belooks of Subzwar.

No.	Name of Belook.	General Description.
1	Mazinan -	A level tract in the extreme west of the district lying on the edge of the salt desert or Kavir. Extensive ruins bear evidence that it formerly supported a numerous population; but, being dependent on artificial or kanat irrigation, it suffered severely from wars and drought. The soil is light and sandy, but not unfertile. Good crops of grain, cotton, and fruits, and a considerable quantity of silk are raised.
2	Kah - -	A hilly tract to the north-west of the district, including the south-western spurs of the Jagatai-Jouven hills, and their inferior slopes. A good deal of the soil is trap, and consequently fertile. Cotton and silk are raised. It has 11 principal villages.
3	Bashtan -	A similar tract lying to the north-east of the last, with also 11 villages.
4	Kohmesh -	A hilly tract to the south of the district, with some wood but scanty cultivation, watered by kanats. In addition to food grains, cotton and silk are raised. There are 28 principal villages.
5	Baroghan -	A sandy barren broken tract along the skirts of the Kohmesh range. There are five principal villages with scanty cultivation.
6	Karrab -	A belook of eight villages, extending from the foot of the hills north-west of Subzwar. It is well watered by springs and kanats, and has wood plantations and orchards. Silk and cotton are raised.
7	Barakoo -	A fertile tract on the hill skirts north and north-west of Subzwar, with nine principal villages, watered by springs and kanats. There are plantations of wood, vineyards, and orchards, and good crops of grain, cotton and silk are raised.
8	Tabbas -	A fine well-watered hilly tract to the north-east of Subzwar, including the lower spurs and skirts of the Jagatai-Jouven hills. It is considered the best belook of the district. Grain crops are raised without irrigation on the hill slopes, and on the plain a good deal of silk and cotton. There are 15 principal villages.
9	Rub-i-Shamat.	An elevated broken tract, comprising the whole of the isolated range dividing Subzwar from Nishapoor, and connecting the Kohmesh and Koh Soorkh Ranges. It is watered by two streams known as the Shamkan and Kila Maidan streams. There are seven principal villages. The soil generally is sandy and unfertile, and the produce inconsiderable. There is a large mixture of people of Arab descent in the Persian population.
10	Kasba -	The level central tract of the district in which stands the town of Subzwar. It is comparatively fertile, well peopled and productive. There are many kanats, and fine crops of cotton and silk are raised. The people are of mixed Arab, Ajam, and Toork race; the Toorks probably Beyats. There are 40 principal villages.

Revenue.—The nominal land revenue assessment of the district is—

	22,000	tomans cash.
	10,000	„ grain (in kind).
Total -	32,000	„

I was informed that fees, cost of collection, and certain recognized exactions, amount to another 10,000 tomans.

Surplus grain produce.—The food grain produce of Subzwar is scarcely more than suffices for the wants of the producers and urban population, and the town is in fact even now dependent on importation from Jagatai and other villages in the Jouven Valley.

Having a good steady market for cotton and silk, the cultivators raise less grain than formerly, and the quantity raised must continue to decrease.

The surplus in the hands of the cultivators, after the last harvest, may be set down at 5,000 kharwars.

Population.—Tracts dependent on kanat irrigation are peculiarly liable to suffer permanent depopulation from wars and famines; for the tunnels require constant care, and removal, for a time, of the cultivators, or their reduction below a certain strength suffices to ensure their destruction. The work of maintenance is laborious, and cannot be carried on by a few hands, and reconstruction is most costly. Subzwar has, since the accession of Fath Ali Shah, suffered constantly from both wars and famines, and its population is consequently reduced almost to the minimum that the country would, in a state of nature, have supported. The rural population I estimate from the average of a number of villages at—

	34,000
The nomads -	4,000
Town population	5,000
Total -	43,000

APPENDIX D.

APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE OF POPULATION, RESOURCES, &C., OF DISTRICTS OF AFGHAN BORDER OF PERSIA.

DISTRICT.	Area in Square Miles.	Population.	Revenue.	Surplus Grain in Tons.	Enrolled Irregular Forces.	Armed Peasantry.
			Rs.			
Mashad - -	7,000	131,000	56,000	2,000	2,000 Eimak and Taimuri Horse. 1,300 local horse -	17,000
Nishapoor - -	2,800	118,000	60,000	3,000	200 Beiat Horse -	20,000
Subzwar - -	5,000	43,000	32,000	1,500	- - -	10,000
Jouven - -	1,100	11,000	4,000	600	800 Foot - -	2,000
Jam - - -	- -	10,000	400	- -	400 Horse - -	2,000
Bakharz - -	- -	15,000	1,200	- -	200 „ - -	2,500
Khaff - -	- -	22,000	- -	- -	200 „ - -	3,500
Turbat-i-Haidari -	- -	25,000	- -	- -	200 „ - -	4,000
Total -	- -	375,000	- -	7,100	5,300	61,000

PRICES OF FOOD-GRAINS, &c., IN PRINCIPAL TOWNS OF THE PERSO-AFGHAN BORDER.

Place.	Wheat.		Barley.		Firewood.		REMARKS.
	Mds.	Krans.	Mds.	Krans.	Mds.	Krans.	
Mashad - -	3	1	4¼	1	4½	1	1 maund (tabriz)=6 lbs. 8·48 oz.
Nishapoor -	6	1	7¼	1	8	1	
Subzwar - -	3½	1	5½	1	5	1	1 kran=10 pence English
Shahrood -	3¼	1	4	1	5	1	
Astrabad - -	6	1	8	1	12	1	
Herat - -	5	1	6	1	9	1	

HERAT.

THE following notes on the condition, &c. of the Herat territory, collected during my stay at Mashad, will, I fear, be deprived by recent events of any interest they might have had. I submit them, therefore, with the greatest diffidence, in the hope that some of the details given regarding the tribes and regarding individuals whose names have come of late to notice may still prove at least of some interest.

The Western or Persian boundary of Afghanistan is formed as far south as Lash Jouvén by the province of Herat and the districts of Herat and Subzwar. From the point where the high road to Persia crosses the Heri-Rood northwards the Afghan side is almost, equally with the Persian, waste and uninhabited. This tract is described as high plateau land, descending to the Heri-Rood in steep bluffs, seamed with deep gullies, the slopes of which are covered with dense forest and undergrowth. Those to the south, in the direction of Kohsan, are used as resting-places by the Turkomans on their marauding excursions, and in fact serve them as a base for their distant forays into Persia. This portion of the border is now not guarded.

Where the border line crosses the valley of the Heri-Rood are the districts of Kohsan and Ghorian. The former is held by Abdool Jalil Khan, who has at his disposal a force of 400 horse with which to guard the border from Shebeshi to Tuman Agha.

South of Kohsan is Ghorian, lately held by Din Mahomed Khan, son of Abdool Zahir Khan, with 500 horse. The posts from Ghorian extended southwards as far as Mogul Batcha, on the skirts of the deserts of Yazdan Kabudan, the border of the Subzwar district. Thence the border line, as before mentioned undefined, extends across a desert unoccupied, save temporarily by the Alizai and Nurzai of Subzwar.

The northern boundary is completely undefined. As far as the Pul-i-Khatoon, or a little below it, one of my informants admitted that the Western Afghan border marched with the Persian border; beyond that nothing was known of it. There is in fact a broad, undulating tract of debatable land, waste but not deficient in grass and water, lying between the frontier villages of Herat and the settlements of the Sark and Salor Turkomans on the

Murghab, across which there is no defined boundary line, and which it would, under present circumstances, scarcely suit any of the nomadic tribes to settle in permanently. The Eimaks of Herat and the Turkomans of the Murghab traverse it and graze their flocks on it, but never in security.

North-east of Herat the boundary appears equally undefined. The Turkomans holding possession of the whole of the upper Murghab; Bala Murghab, and the routes thence, which were in the hands of the Wazeer Yar Mahomed Khan, are now unapproachable to travellers and caravans.

South-east are the lands of the Eimak and Hazara tribes, subject to Herat. South the province extends to the limits of Subzwar, beyond which lies the district of Furrah, governed by Mir Afzul Khan.

General condition under government of Yakoob Khan.

The government of the province has been in the hands of Sirdar Yakoob Khan since the year 1863, when he was left there by his father under the tutelage of Mehdi Goolli Khan Jamshidi, known as Khan Agha. Up to the time of the Sirdar's rebellion in 1869, it is admitted that he was a popular and successful ruler and leader. The peasantry were contented and prosperous under light assessments; the tribes were encouraged by presents and by fixed grants allotted to their chiefs to restrain their plunderings; and trade was fostered and protected. There appear to have been insurmountable obstacles to the reopening of the direct road to Maimena by Bala Murghab, but the alternative route by Kurrookh was rendered secure and free of tolls. The Sirdar himself engaged in trade, having usually 700 camels employed in transporting goods to and from Merv and Meshed.

In the town of Herat the Sirdar had attached to himself all the principal merchants and moollahs, and the people followed their lead.

The Turkoman tribes of the Murghab and Merv had been generally on bad terms with Yar Mahomed Khan. During the rule of Sultan Ahmed Khan they had not spared the Herat villages, but plundered the Heratis and Persians indifferently. With them Yakoob Khan soon opened communications, and succeeded in securing almost complete immunity for his villagers and traders. The Eimaks occasionally lost cattle, but the villagers were seldom molested; and so carefully were their ally's subjects and goods distinguished and respected, that on several occasions the marauders carried off Persians and their goods, leaving the Afghan portion of the caravan to continue its journey.

This immunity, together with a light taxation, left all classes little to desire, and backed by the Sirdar's high reputation for liberality and courage, secured his influence and the popularity of his *régime*.

The events of 1871 were foreseen by every one at all cognisant of the condition of affairs: the rebellion of Yakoob Khan, his flight, his reception by the Chief of Ghain, who finds his interest in instigating and spurring Persian aggression and intrigue and in fomenting Afghan discords, his subsequent successful raid on

Herat, and his capture of that place with a body of a few hundred horse only. After the first news of his appearance at Ghain was received at Herat, the issue was in fact decided, as the incidents of the action of Shekawan, where the troops of the Ameer sent out by Fateh Mahomed Khan, the Governor met the Sirdar, prove very clearly. Of the four Herati Regiments, only two attempted to make any stand; and the commander of these, Jan Beg Kurrookhi, was cut down in their presence, it is said, by Yakoob Khan himself. His death decided the affair, and the Sirdar found a few hours later the gates of Herat open to him, and his cousin already shut up in the citadel by a body of his partisans. The influential Eimak chiefs, headed by the Khan Agha, did not move out with the Ameer's force, and yet do not appear to have declared openly for the Sirdar until his success was assured.

Late submission of Sirdar foreseen.

The failure of the late abortive attempt and the Sirder's surrender were as certain and foreseen as clearly as the brilliant termination of his first rebellion. The condition of the country and of the Sirdar's external relations was so completely altered, that there was evidently no alternative left to him but submission or defeat and flight. Doubts were entertained, or expressed only by the ill-informed, or by partisans anxious to make the most of a failing cause.

Causes that led to it.

The Sirdar's second term of rule in Herat was commenced under much altered conditions, though to outward appearance he had strengthened his positions. His power was based on popularity, and could only be maintained, as the event has proved, on the same basis; and his popularity was the result of a favourable combination of circumstances which enabled him to lay the lightest burdens on his subjects.

The rebellion, though successful, wrought a complete change.

The Ameer, in place of a Suzerain, became an enemy, none the less dangerous that he dissembled, and it became necessary for the Sirdar to secure a party in the country.

It was also made evident to the people that Persia was unable to give timely and effectual aid to a pretender. Yakoob Khan was well received in Ghain no doubt, but he left Persian soil with very little accession to the force he had brought with him. The Eimak chiefs also had to be paid for the risk of their passive participation in rebellion and to be secured. For all these purposes money was necessary, and could only be raised in the country. The land revenue, formerly carelessly collected, was now anticipated and levied by force, and the imposts on merchants and traders were increased. Even by these means barely sufficient was raised to pay the troops, and to retain the fidelity of a crowd of needly partisans.

Under these circumstances the alienation of two important classes, the peasantry and the traders, was inevitable and also ruinous. For the first could alone furnish the regiments with which the Ameer's disciplined troops might be met; and the second were able to influence powerfully the course of events, by assisting

all classes to form a correct opinion as to the relative strength of the Ameer and his son.

As time passed, the Ameer's power and his sons' necessities and difficulties increased, and it was evident to all on the spot last summer that, as regards Herat, the cause of the latter was almost hopeless. If events in other parts of the country befriended him, he might hope for a successful issue, but not otherwise. The treasury was empty, and the revenue had been forestalled. Recruits for two new regiments were obtained with the greatest difficulty, and there were signs of wavering in the ranks of his adherents and allies. The Jamshidi chief and the Turkoman Taj Khan were reported to be secretly in communication with the Ameer, and the former was known to have openly dissuaded his son-in-law from resistance.

Condition still prosperous.

Though the course of action forced on the Sirdar by his necessities had effectually aided in the ruin of his popularity and of his cause, the condition of the country was not much altered for the worse. The immunity from Turkoman raids continued, and though the sums exacted from the peasantry were large, they appear to have been paid without much pressure; trade also was impeded, but not arrested, by the heavier imposts levied. On the whole the province appears to have enjoyed an uninterrupted period of prosperity, and to have advanced much in population, production, and wealth; and also to have acquired a certain intrinsic power of resistance to disturbing influences which cannot fail to count always as a valuable factor towards future peace.

Tribes of Herat.

The tribes of Herat, well known under the appellation of Char Eimak and Hazara, are the most powerful force in the province. They out-number the settled population, and they have an additional strength due to tribal cohesion and union. United under one head, they would certainly dispose of the government of the province if the issue were left to be decided by them. The following observations, made from a distance and with scanty means, purport merely to bring existing information as to numbers and locations of the tribes up to date. The estimates of numbers were carefully compared and corrected by two or three authorities.

The Sirdar's policy towards the Eimaks had been uniformly one of conciliation, and he had succeeded, as was believed, in attaching them to his cause: 10,000 cavalry of the different tribes were retained by the payment of *mowajib* or money grants to the chiefs, and could in a few days be called out for service. The principal chiefs also resided in Herat, and were taken into the Sirdar's counsels.

The term Eimak is confined properly to the four tribes—Jamshidi, Firozkohi, Taimuni, and Hazara; but some of the Shiah Hazara tribes and the Taimuris are also called by that name, especially in Persia, where the distinction is little known. Except those settled in Persia and some families in Herat, the whole are nomads, living almost entirely by their flocks and herds: they grow just sufficient wheat for home consumption, and manu-

facture some woollen fabrics for sale in Herat; also some felts and carpets.

Jamshidis. The Jamshidis number 10,000 families, and can mount, it is said, 4,000 men. They are located principally on the pastures 20 to 30 miles north of Herat, beyond Kala Khushk, and as far as Chingoorack. In summer they move southward to some higher pastures almost the same distance north-east of Herat. These are principally at Dewandar and Band-i-Afzul on a tributary of the Murghab.

Khan Agha or Mehdi Goolli Khan, the most prominent chief of the tribe, is well known. His services to the Afghans during the siege of Herat secured him the friendship of the Ameer Sher Ali Khan. He was left as adviser or guardian of Sirdar Yakoob Khan, and allowed to give his daughter to him in marriage. Since then his conduct appears to have been guided by much sagacity and prudence, and he has, without casting off his allegiance to the Ameer, retained considerable influence over the Sirdar. In 1868 he accompanied the latter, with 2,000 horsemen of his tribe, to Girishk, Candahar, and Cabul, and was present at all the battles fought during that campaign.

A section of the tribe under one of the minor chiefs, Alla Yar Khan, migrated to Meshed after the siege in 1857. They number 500 families, and have fixed location.

The tribe is of Persian descent, and their language is Persian. They formerly held the course of the Murghab as far as Punjdeh.

Firozkohi. The Firozkohi, also by tradition of Persian origin, are now the most powerful, wealthy, and numerous tribe of the Eimak. They number 15,000 tents, and can mount 5,000 men. They hold the whole tract of mountains stretching from about two days' journey, *i.e.* 40 to 50 miles north-east of Herat, to the borders of Maimena. Their principal locations are the pastures of Kadis, Singar, Shahr-i-Armiyan and Koocha Karma.

Their most prominent chief is Futhoolla Beg of Chukcheran, son of Sirdar Mahomed Azim Khan, Attalik, said to be devoted to the cause of Yakoob Khan, and also on good terms with the Jamshidi chief. He accompanied Yakoob Khan on his campaign in Afghanistan with 1,000 horse.

The second in impotance is Behram Khan, head of a section of 5,000 tents.

A few hundred only of the Firozkohi are entertained permanently at Herat. The language of the tribe is Persian.

Taimuni. The Taimuni, said to be of pure Tartar race, hold the mountains of Ghor, south of Herat, they are a large and powerful tribe, but being scattered, they appear to have less direct influence on its affairs than the tribes above mentioned.

A large proportion of the tribe live in fixed villages in the mountains. They number 30,000 houses and tents, and are able to furnish 5,000 horse and 15,000 to 20,000 footmen. Their principal locations are—Persi, 20 fursakhs south-east of Herat; Tigar Aslan, near Persi; Jewajah, 10 fursakhs beyond Persi; Sokhar, 40 fursakhs south from Herat, and Tiwara, south-east of

Herat. Their principal chiefs are Ghaffar Khan, who accompanied Yakoob Khan in 1868 with 1,000 horse, and Atta Khan, son of Azad Khan of Persi, who is entertained at Herat and has under him 5,000 tents.

The Hazara, reckoned among the Char Eimaks, are a section of the great tribe, holding the line of the Hindoo Koosh, from the valley of the Oxus to that of the Helmund. They have, however, been long separated from the main body and subject to Afghan influence through their location at Kala Now to the north-east of Herat, and have accepted the Sunni creed. They were entirely dispersed by Yar Mahomed Khan, and are now to be found principally in Persian territory. Hazara.

Two thousand families were brought to Mashad, and granted lands in Isferayeen after the last siege of Herat, their chief Yusuf Khan, of the Baj-Boghar tribe, being given the rank and pay of a colonel in the Persian service. There are also some families in the town of Mashad, and in Jam and Bakharz. They may be put down at 3,000 families in all.

In Herat the tribe is much scattered; some are to be found in the frontier villages, others in the town, and a few nomadising in the Bakharz tract. They are said to number 4,000 families.

The subjoined list of the Hazara tribes is on the authority of Yusuf Khan Sirteep. It gives their approximate numbers and locations. The Sunni and Shiah Hazaras, the Mongols, and the Barbari are all included.

Tribes of the Hazara.

No.	Name.	Nos. of Families.	Locations, &c.
1	Nakodari	100,000	Afghanistan, Badakshan, and Persia, 150 families are in Mashad.
2	Baranghor	400	Herat territory.
3	Bajboghar	12,000	350 families in Herat, the rest in Hazara Pas-i-Koh.
4	Firistan	400	Hazara Pas-i-Koh.
5	Laghari	300	Herat, Khorassan, Hazara, Pas-i-Koh, Turkistan, Sar-i-Pul, and Maimena.
6	Kahkaha	700	Baeghiz (Baekhez), the tract on the upper Murghab, separating Herat from Maimena. The Hazaras of this section are known as Badakshanis.
7	Najak	200	Herat territory.
8	Bubak	200	„ „
9	Kundalan	500	Hazara Pas-i-Koh.
10	Dihzangi	1,000	„ „
11	Kalanzai	50	„ „
12	Mir Marak	100	„ „
13	Surkhawi	700	Maimena „
14	Jafari	70 or 80	Herat and Khorassan.
15	Khoordakzai	50 or 60	„ „
16	Zaimat	200	Herat.
17	Khojah (Syuds)	400	„
18	Kadi	100	„
19	Pahlawan	60 or 70	„
20	Bajalai	50 or 60	Herat and Khorassan.
21	Kalhoor	30	Herat.

No.	Name.	Nos. of Families.	Locations, &c.
22	Komari -	70	Herat.
23	Tahiri - -	200	,,
24	Kogdari -	50 or 60	,, and Khorassan.
25	Navi - -	20 or 30	,,
26	Ishanboghar -	400	,, and Khorassan.
27	Balghoor -	50	,,
28	Shekh Ali -	10,000	Mountains near Cabul.
29	Dah Koondi.		

NOTE.—The appellations Sarijungali and Yaka Olangi, given to different sections of the Hazara, appear to denote only the localities inhabited by those sections. A number of these tribal names are purely Persian, and must have been acquired after the immigration of the tribe. Such names as Nagodari or Nakodari and Balghoor are undeniably Tartar, and probably the original appellations of all the tribes.

By their own traditions they came from the borders of China or "Khitay," from an ancient capital known as Kandab, so late as the time of the death of Chingiz Khan. The mass of them own an unwilling allegiance to Cabul, and have no connections with the rulers of Herat.

Tymooris.

The Tymooris are said to be of pure Tartar origin, but have entirely lost their distinctive type of feature. They are found on both sides of the border. The whole tribe is said to number 8,000 tents; of which about one-half are on the Herat side; in Herat 2,000 tents, the rest in Subzwar and Furrah.

Their summer quarters are at Persi, in the mountains; the winter, at Yazdan Kabodan, on the edge of the desert, separating Subzwar from the Ghainat. Their principal chief in Herat is Mohamad Ibrahim Khan, a man apparently of little influence. The Tymooris have lost their tribal cohesion, but I gathered that it would not be impossible to unite them again.

Sarik and Salor Turkomans.

The relations of the Herat Government with the Turkomans of Merv have been touched upon before in connection with that place. The remaining tribes on the Herat border are the Sarrak and Salor Turkomans.

The former was once a powerful tribe, numbering 15,000 tents, and held possession of both Sarraks and Merv. Their defeat and expulsion from those points has been mentioned. They are now much decreased in numbers and importance.

They count still 10,000 tents, and hold the whole line of the Murghab, from Yolotan, 30 miles above Merv, to the borders of Maimena, where they touch the pastures of the Firozkohi Eimaks. Their principal locations are Yolotan, Punjdeh, 35 to 40 miles higher up, and Bala Murghab, where the old high road crosses the river.

Karim Verdi Ishan, of Yolotan, son of the old Khalifa of Merv, whose influence over the Sarik, then the most powerful tribe of the Eastern steppe, was unbounded, is their leader, and is said to have the tribe in his hands.

All negotiations of the Sarik with their neighbours are carried on entirely by him, and he would have power, if not to bind the

tribe by his engagements, at least to bring them to accept his views.

With the Tekkah the Sarik are, per force, on good terms, and it may be assumed that they would aid them in the event of invasion. The bond of union is formed of the class of Mullahs or Ishans, who pass from one tribe to another, and would certainly, in the opinion of competent authorities, bring about a union against a Russian or Persian invasion.

Since the defeat of the Persians at Merv, the Sarik have entirely dropped their connection with them. They raid indefatigably on the borders of Mashad and Ghain, and have rejected all attempts of the Persians to renew the alliance.

On 19th March 1873, more than a year before my arrival at Mashad, two Aksakals were sent by the Khalifa of Yolotan to the Governor-General, with a conditional offer of allegiance; but it was ascertained or believed that they were sent at the instance of the ruler of Herat, to test the policy of the Persians towards the tribes on his border, and they were dismissed with no definite reply. Up to the time of my departure there had been no further attempt at negotiations.

With the Herat ruler the tribe has been, for some time, on terms of friendship (the body of Turkomans mentioned, as having offered their services to Mohamad Ayoob Khan, were no doubt of this tribe). One of their chiefs, a noted "Allamani" or robber-leader, Twair Khan, was in the pay and service of the Sirdar, and could at any time, have brought a body of 3,000 or 4,000 Sarik and Salor horse to his standard.

Salor.

The Salor are a small tribe, and appear to have now no separate political existence. They are renowned for their bravery and cruelty, insomuch that any deed of unusual barbarity is at once attributed to them. They number now 4,000 families, and are to be found scattered along both banks of the Murghab, together with the Sarik, with whom also they appear to act in conjunction in matters relating to their common neighbours.

Khanates of Afghan Turkistan.

Touching the relations of the Sirdar with the neighbouring petty states in the east, it was difficult, at a distance and under circumstances that precluded free access to those who might have the necessary local knowledge, to obtain any exact information; but the following notes may not be devoid of interest.

Maimena, the most western of the petty states of Afghan Turkistan, still retains a semblance of independence; but the Mir or Governor sends tribute in the shape of presents to the Amir of Cabul. The town of Maimena is 19 marches, for camel caravans (60 fursakhs) by the Kurrookh route, through Badkhez, from Herat.

The population of the town and district amounts to 20,000 houses and tents, 100,000 to 140,000 souls, principally Usbegs. Ten thousand horse and several thousand armed footmen can be raised in a few days.

Hoosein Khan, the present ruler, is a grandson of Mizrab Khan. His uncle, Hukumat Khan, was put to death, 15 years

ago, by his brother. The state has since rather declined in prosperity, but is nevertheless enjoying a term of unaccustomed tranquillity and peace. Hukumat Khan left several sons.

The Mir is on bad terms with Mohamad Alum Khan, the Afghan Governor of Turkistan, but appears still to enjoy the Amir's confidence. He is also in direct communication with the Amir, and does not own any allegiance to the Herat Government. With Bokhara he has no connection, and, I am informed, no communication save in the way of trade.

Shiburghan. The state of Shiburghan, three stages from Maimena, has been subject to the Amir of Cabul, since the occupation of Balkh by Dost Mohamad Khan.

Its chief, Mir Rustum Khan, who is subordinate to Mohamad Alum Khan, and is a native, is reputed a faithful adherent of the present *régime* in Cabul.

The people, chiefly Usbegs and nomads, number 10,000 tents and houses, and can furnish 5,000 mounted men. A tribute or revenue of 50,000 *tangas* (1 *tanga*=Rupees 3 Cabuli=39 annas Indian) is paid to the Ameer.

Andkhoi. Andkhoi, one stage north-west from Shiburghan, has a large nomad population of 8,000 to 10,000 families, Usbegs and Afshars. The chief, Rustum Khan, son of Ghazanfar Khan, Afshar, holds under the Governor of Turkistan. No regular cash assessment is levied on the district, but the ruler pays yearly a tribute in the shape of a large number of horses and camels for the Afghan army of Turkistan, and maintains a body of 500 horse, which is permanently employed.

Akhchah. The little state of Akhchah is said to be now held by an Afghan Governor, who was, up to a late date, one Shahrukh, a Kafir, a General in the Ameer's army. The population, chiefly nomads, number 3,000 families, Usbegs and Arsari Turkomans from the Oxus. They pay a small tribute in money and kind, and are said to be prosperous and contented. The town contains 1,000 families, and is noted for its silk manufactures.

Sar-i-Pul. The chiefship of Sar-i-Pul, 10 fursakhs from Shiburghan, is inhabited entirely by nomads. It is now held by Mohamad Khan, a native. The population, consisting of Usbegs, and a race said to be of Arab descent, numbers 20,000 families. A fixed money revenue is paid to the Cabul Government.

The following is a list of the principal men in Herat, most of whose names have been brought prominently during the late disturbances.

1. *Abdul Zahir Khan*—Mohamadzai of Candahar, Governor of Ghorian.

2. *Din Mohamad Khan*—Son of Abdul Zahir Khan, Yakoob Khan's confidential attendant and chief accountant.

3. *Abdul Jalil Khan*—Mohamadzai of the Topchibashi family of Candahar, brother of Abdul Rahman Khan, Governor of Kohsan, in the time of Sultan Ahmad Khan. Abdul Rahman took refuge with other Herati chiefs in Persia after Herat was

reduced by Dost Mohamad Khan, and was in the pay of the Persian Government for three or four years. On his return to Afghanistan he was put to death by Shere Ali Khan.

4. *General Fakir Ahmad*—Son of Madad Mirakhor Reeka, Parsiwan, Commandant of the Herat troops.

5. *Shahghassee Ataoolla*—Brother of Shahghassee Sherdil.

6. *Futeoolla Beg*—Ferozkohi, already mentioned.

7. *Ata Khan Taimuni*—Was nominated to the chiefship of the tribe by Yakoob Khan in place of Ghaffar Khan, of Ghor, who was imprisoned last summer.

8. *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*—Taimuni, Chief of Ghor, &c., before mentioned.

9. *Khan Aga, Jamshidi*—Before mentioned.

10. *General Mohamad Jan*—Candahari, son-in-law of Abdul Zahir Khan.

11. *Sirdar Mohamad Hasan Khan*—Mohamadzai of Candahar, son of Sirdar Mohamad Quli Khan, son of Wazir Fateh Khan, Barakzai, Governor of Subzwar, a man described as having great influence with the Herat troops.

12. *Sirdar Abdoola Khan*—Nasiri, a native of Jelallabad, who was with Yakoob Khan for several years in Herat.

13. *Syud Mohamad of Pesheen*—A leading merchant of Pesheen, a great favourite of Yakoob, known as Malik-ul-Tujjar at Herat.

14. *Shahghassee Mohamad Atah*—Nephew of Shahghassee Sherdil. Fined 6,000 and imprisoned by Yakoob last summer on a charge of treason.

15. *Shahghassee Ata Mohamad*—Nephew of Shahghassee Sherdil, Yakoob Khan's chief councillor.

Observations on the political situation in Herat at the time of Sirdar Yakoob Khan's submission in the autumn of 1874.

Decline of the Sirdar's popularity.

In the accompanying notes on the Herat territory, I have stated that Yakoob Khan's necessities had brought about the alienation of the affections of his subjects, while the consolidation of the Amir's power and his ability to deal with any ordinary internal disturbance, had become so widely appreciated and accepted as to allay, to a great extent, any fears that the people might feel regarding the consequences of holding aloof from their Governor. At the same time I expressed my belief that the country and the people were not, to any great extent, impoverished, and that a comparatively long period of tranquillity had developed in the cultivating and trading classes, a strong interest in, and a desire for a continuance of peace, as well as a passive power of resistance to disturbing influences that did not exist before, at least to the same extent. These views were based on reports of the difficulty experienced by the Sirdar's officials in levying imposts and collecting recruits, and of the secretly-expressed sentiments of the townspeople with regard to the threatened hostilities, and are, I think, justified by the issue of recent events.

Consideration of causes.

Some consideration under local lights of the causes that produced this situation of affairs, the very reverse of what might have been anticipated when the Sirdar returned to Herat in 1870, may not be deemed unnecessary.

The Sirdar's intentions and aims.

It is now tolerably clear that Yakoob Khan had, from the time of his resuming the government of Herat, fairly entered the lists with his father, and proposed to himself to secure either entire supremacy or independent government in Herat. That such was his aim was universally believed, and it is difficult to find any other explanation of his conduct. It is also now clear that his means were inadequate to the struggle, and that he found himself forced to submit and to accept any terms that might be offered him.

Resources inadequate.

The resources at the disposal of a ruler of Heret are, under the most favourable circumstances, inconsiderable. The district, though fertile and productive, cannot furnish a revenue sufficient to maintain a government compelled to purchase the fidelity of its troops and the suffrages of a large proportion of its subjects. The trade, though flourishing, is chiefly a transit trade, and there is a very well-defined limit to the amount of impost that such a trade will bear, though scarcely any bounds to the harm that the powerful mercantile classes may work when their interests are interfered with.

The forces of the province also are comparatively few in number and of inferior quality. Eight regiments of under 600 men each were with difficulty maintained. Two were in fact never completed, and were, up to a late date, unarmed and disorganised by desertions.

The armament and instruction of a regular force is also a matter of peculiar difficulty to the government of a province situated at the utmost possible distance from all sources whence a knowledge of modern systems may be obtained.

The irregular troops are composed of tribes hostile to Afghan rule, and often to each other. The bond that would bind them to one cause must be a most powerful one: ample means and the fullest confidence of success might for a time do so.

Thus, in addition to the difficulties of an empty treasury, the Sirdar's forces were disorganised, and the principle tribal chiefs known to be at least lukewarm in his cause, while reports of the constant increase of his father's strength destroyed his credit and prestige with the people.

External aid and alliances hopeless.

Rulers of Herat have however by virtue of their position, usually been able to rely upon aid from without, and it was believed up to the last moment that Yakoob Khan had some expectation of assistance, either from parties in his own country or elsewhere.

Until the time of the arrival of the Ghilzai chiefs at Herat rumours of civil war were rife: the Sirdar and his mother were said to be in communication with the Momunds and Ghilzais, and preparing them for a rising simultaneous with the threatened attack of the Ameer's troops on Herat. The deputation of the

Ghilzai chiefs, however, and their approach to Herat was deemed to have extinguished this hope, for it was a token of submission.

Out of Afghanistan the ruler of Herat could look for aid only to Persia, to the Turkomans, or, according to popular belief, to Russia.

From Persia assistance given at such a time would have been only the following out of a traditional policy, but Yakoob Khan could not hope for aid from that quarter. The current explanation was that he had cut himself off from all sympathy from the Persian Monarch by his refusal to accept certain conditions offered to him at the time of the interview at Mashad in 1866; and such was very possibly the case. So far as I could learn, the relations of successive Governors General subsequent to the meeting—the Jallal-u-Dowla, Homza Mirza, Hushmat-ul-Mulk, the Hissam-ul-Sultana—with the Sirdar were almost hostile. Measures up to that time adopted for joint protection of the border were neglected, and the Turkomans obtained free access across the Afghan border. In smaller matters also the want of cordiality was evinced. With the appointment of the late Nizam-u-Dowla an attempt was made to improve the existing relations, but appears to have met with no response, the Sirdar refusing to reply directly to the communications he received from Mashad. Relations with Persia.

With the winter of 1873 came symptoms of the approaching rupture between him and his father, and his difficulties would presumbly have induced him to listen to any offers that might come from the Persian Government; but I could not learn on any good authority that there was more than an attempt made at an understanding. No money, and certainly no arms, appear to have gone from Persia, and the force on the frontier was at the lowest ebb. The mission of the Herat agent was generally believed to have connection with Persian intrigues and Herat difficulties, and such a belief was most natural, but I was able to get no satisfactory confirmation of it. By the Khan of Kelat, who was in a position to know what was passing, and who had no motives for saying anything other than the truth, I was informed that the agent was sent, not only ostensibly, but really in the matter of the raid from Khaff. At the same time he had been entrusted with messages from the Governor General to the Sirdar offering him assistance and the sympathy of the Persian Government. He took no letters, and had no power to do more than open communications.

That he had such subsidiary instructions is probable enough, and is satisfactory as showing that no more intimate relations existed, at least through the medium of the Khorassan Government.

Mir Alum Khan of Ghaeen, who arrived at Mashad in August, may possibly have carried some more definite proposals; but if so, no result came of them.

It may therefore, I think, be assumed that no intrigues on the part of the Persians had any real effect in increasing the obduracy of the Sirdar.

With the Turkomans the Sirdar was in close communication, but they would under any circumstances have been scarcely able Relations with the Turkomans.

to give him efficient aid, and the time for such an alliance was peculiarly unfavorable, for the Tekkah of Merv and Akhal, the only tribes sufficiently powerful, were fully occupied in anticipation of and preparation for Russian invasion, and looked to the Ameer and his allies in India for assistance. They appear to have fully appreciated Yakoob's position and relative power, and to have definitely and at an early date decided on the course most consistent with their own interest. Almost the first fact that I had occasion to record with reference to the politics of the Merv tribe was, that their relations with Yakóob were subsidiary to their relations with the Ameer, and that the chief Taj Khan, who was the Sirdar's medium of communication, was known to be devoted to the latter.

The Sirdar's influence, in fact went no further than a very short purse could carry it, and could have brought him little more aid than the 500 horsemen who ultimately joined his brother Ayoob Khan. That such was the case he must at last have become well aware.

Communications with Russia.

The Sirdar's communications with the Russian authorities at so great a distance from his frontier, though a matter of common belief, were, I am inclined to think, quite unimportant. It would have been possible to communicate with ease and speedily by Mashad directly with the Legation at Teheran, or across the steppes with Ivanoff at Khiva, or by Maimena with Bokhara and Tashkend. There is a Russian agent at Mashad, but I do not think he was employed. With Ivanoff at Shorakhan (Petro-Alexandrovsk) I had reason to believe that some letters had been exchanged, for I heard on tolerably good authority of the passage of Turkoman messengers from Herat to Khiva. The individuals selected were not known to the Turkoman chiefs themselves. Yakoob Khan may possibly have asked for an asylum, as was reported publicly; but for a belief in any further connection or closer relations I found no grounds.

Submission inevitable.

Deprived thus at all points of hope of external aid, and with no adequate resources of his own, the Sirdar's submission was an absolute necessity, and could not long have been avoided.

Political tendencies of Herat population.

The cultivating and trading classes of Herat appear to be, as I have said, in a fairly prosperous condition, and to be averse to war in any cause. They have acquired some confidence in the present Government of Cabul, and a belief that it is calculated to secure the condition of internal tranquillity that is most desired by them. I was assured that the family of the late ruler of Herat, Sultan Ahmed Jan, towards whom they have been supposed to have some leanings, would find no support or sympathy among these classes, and there is no other family that has such claims on them.

Of the Eimaks.

The Eimak tribes are, from their mode of life and the nature of their occupations, more restless and less inclined to a life of unvaried tranquillity; but even they, from what I could gather, appreciate to some extent the advantages of the comparatively firm rule that has been established, and the consequent security under which they now enjoy their pastures, and devote themselves

to their more peaceful avocations. They are always ready for action, and could be roused to all their old energy and enthusiasm for war and plunder; but their chiefs recognise the stability of the existing government, and they themselves are content to enjoy the fruits of peace.

The old feeling of hatred to the Afghans appears to exist in full force, but I was assured that they would with difficulty be induced to favour the pretensions of any rival faction in the kingdom. As mercenaries by nature and tradition, they would no doubt in effect be at the bidding of the party having the longest purse.

The Firozkohis and Jamshidis, the tribes in direct contact with the Turkomans of the Sarik and Salor tribes, are at the same time at constant feud with them and in constant communication. They form, in fact, the connecting link between the people of the Afghan border and the desert tribes, and the party securing them would also have the best prospect of attracting to its ranks their Turkoman neighbours. On the other hand, any power owning the allegiance of the Turkomans would be enabled to extend its influence to the Eimaks on their borders, or would have facilities for so doing.

Influence of Persia with the people.

The changes that a period of comparative tranquillity has effected in the condition and inclinations of the Heratees have, as might be expected, diminished the influence that Persia has always more or less persistently and successfully maintained in the province. Even the Shiahs, I am assured, who form a considerable proportion of the population, have no desire for a change of rule that might bring with it a disturbance of present conditions. The Heratees, whether Shiahs or Sunnis, have no love for the Afghans, but they also have none for the Persians, and they have good reason to fear the effects of Persian attempts at encroachment. There is room for doubt that the Kajars would under any circumstances have the suffrages of the people, and at present it appears certain that their pretensions would meet with little sympathy even within the walls of the town which they look upon as the stronghold of their influence.

The Eimak tribes are, so far as I could learn, thoroughly opposed to Persian intrusion, and would no doubt end in resisting it. The sections of the tribes living in Persia, and for the most part Sunnis at heart if not by profession, appear to be discontented and only awaiting a fair opportunity to return to their former seats: their influence would no doubt in the event of hostilities with Afghanistan be prejudicial to Persia.

The peasantry of the Herat and of the Subzwar border, the Hazara, the Taimuri, and Taimuni villages, the people of Ghorian and Kohsan, and the nomadic Alizai and Nurzai, have presumably no very strong feeling of dislike to, or affection for, any particular dynasty, but they know that Persian aggression means pillage and devastation, and they have the usual border antipathies. A summons to arms for a march into Persia would be responded to with alacrity,—the more so that the Afghan borderers have acquired a moral superiority over those of Persia that is very marked. In

their border forays and fights they will defend themselves against superior numbers and attack, where the Persians would not dare to do so; and their raids are made openly, while those of the Persians, usually in retaliation, are made by stealth. This difference is not the result of difference of race, for the border communities on both sides are composed usually of the same elements, nor of superior armament or numbers on the Afghan side; but apparently to difference of organisation and government. The Afghans have some advantage in shorter lines and are united and fairly organised, while the Persian posts are scattered, the local chiefs are deprived of authority, and the officers employed on the border are commonly strangers and mercenaries.

The chances of successful aggression by Persia may therefore be reckoned to depend in the first instance certainly on her own resources; for she could not count on any sympathy in the enemies' ranks.

Influence of European powers.

Of the influence of the only two European powers of which the Heratees know anything I was able to gain some general ideas.

The political agitation consequent on the recent movements of Russia and England of course spreads thither, and Herat is regarded as an objective point of all attempts at extension of influence by moral or physical forces, secondary only to Merv.

Russia.

The people and chiefs have had direct contact with both England and Russia through the Herat Mission of 1837-38 and through Khanikoff's Mission in 1858. The Russian party wintered at Herat, travelling further under Persian auspices. Its chief, M. Khanikoff, cannot have failed to add to the vivid impressions of Russian power that prevail in Khorassan and Herat, and his presence was at least a proof to the people of the extensive influence and the wide scope of the designs of the Russian Government.

England.

Regarding the political effects of the residence of the English Mission in Herat, judging from what I have observed and heard, it is, I think, scarcely too much to say that it has left the country fairly open to any efforts that it may be desirable to make towards a fresh extension of influence or to actual occupation,—and this in spite of subsequent events. The triumph of Yar Mahomed Khan, the retirement of the Mission, and consequent injury to those who had shown themselves in any way friendly to British interests, has of course left a perceptible and indeliable impression, the adverse force of which has been much increased by subsquent events in Afghanistan, and by a long period of unaccountable (to Orientals) inaction, during which our prestige diminished and the power of Russia became a tangible fact to the people. But our influence is a reality, and we should, I believe, find the people and their chiefs in the main ready to receive us on the faith of past good will and of benefits conferred.

Importance of desert barrier.

The Russians do not appear to have now any basis of influence or any connections beyond what has been already noted in reference to Yakoob Khan; but if they should occupy Mashad

as a "commercial" centre, they will no doubt find means of communicating directly with Herat.

The Turkomans form now to the north and north-east a complete barrier to any advance of influence in that direction, but only by their adverse occupation of Merv, by which they maintain the desert as a barrier between Russian and English influence. So long as that barrier is maintained, it appeared to me that the Heratees of all classes would be open solely to British influences. When once it is passed, Russia comes in on equal terms as regards physical difficulties of communication, if not at an advantage, and with the additional prestige of unchecked advance.

The disadvantage in the event of war of the presence of Russia so near Herat is so obvious, that the subject must have already claimed much attention, and is moreover beyond the scope of my instructions. But having had the advantage of a near view of the position, and of many local lights, I may be permitted to state my opinion, that, assuming Russia's object to go no further than the creation of embarrassments in Afghanistan and India when need arises, it is of vital importance to the successful pursuance of the present policy of maintaining a free, independent, and friendly state in Afghanistan that there should be no point of contact in such close proximity to Herat. With the desert between Russian influence and Afghanistan at all points, the Afghans may be left to follow out their own destiny, and to lay themselves open, it may be hoped, gradually to the influences of civilisation; for, apart from other advantages, mere difficulties of communication will then have reduced to a minimum the power to give the material assistance that must be the basis of the moral influence necessary to the success of such intrigues.

(Sd.) G. C. NAPIER, *Captain,*
On Special Duty in Persia.

No. 8.

NOTES ON THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE POPULATION OF EASTERN KHORASSAN.

No. 21, dated Calcutta, 30th April 1875.

From CAPTAIN the HON. G. C. NAPIER, on Special Duty in Persia to C. U. AITCHISON, ESQ., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I have the honour to submit herewith some notes on the political condition of the population of Eastern Khorassan as a portion of the report on the Perso-Afghan border submitted with my last, No. 19, of the 2nd instant.

A recapitulation of the divisions of Eastern Khorassan, with a brief analysis of the composition of its population, will serve to elucidate the subsequent remarks.

Border districts.

The border districts or chiefships, Jam, Bakharz, and Khaff, may be at once dismissed. It will suffice to add to the notice of the people already taken, that, as regards information and political tendencies and aspirations, they may be placed in the same category with the Eimak mercenaries of Persia and the Eimak tribes of Herat, whom I have mentioned in my notes on that territory.

Interior districts of frontier.

The interior border districts are Turbat, Tursheez, Nishapur, and Subzwar.

The whole of the population of these districts may be divided into three classes—cultivators, nomads, and towns-people—and consist mainly of three races—the Toork, Koord, and Ajam, or Tajik, a term better known and applicable to the Persian or Aryan element of all the populations of Asia. The cultivators are of all three races, but there is perhaps a larger proportion of the Tajik element than of the other two.

Of pure nomads, that is, of communities living entirely in tents, there are comparatively few, but the roving instincts of the Toork race are so ineradicable that the Toork and Koord villagers are almost invariably to be found in the summer camped under the black tents of the country on their higher pastures.

The pure nomads are either Koords or clans of Tartar descent, Taimuris, and Hazaras, &c., or Belooch. The latter are to be found sparsely scattered over the whole of Khorassan, those located in the northern parts retaining only the name of their race, with slight traces of its distinctive type.

The town populations are naturally far more heterogeneous in their composition than the rural, but the basis of all appears to be the Ajam or Tajik element, on which have settled successive deposits of all the races, that have at different times overrun the east of Persia. There are Toorks of various tribes, Usbegs, Mervees, who were again a collection of Toork tribes from Persia, Arabs, Heratees, Afghans, and many others.

Population of Mashad.

In the Mashad district the urban population appears to stand in the proportion of about 1 to 2 to the rural, and the pure nomadic element of the latter does not exceed probably about $\frac{1}{8}$th of the whole.

Of the town population, including pilgrims, not less than half may be put down as of Tajik descent.

The cultivators are of all three races, the Toorks much predominating.

The nomads are Koords or Eimaks.

In Turbat and Tursheez the urban population forms but a small proportion of the whole, and the nomadic element, which is chiefly Belooch, has been lately much reduced. The villagers or cultivators are the largest class: they are chiefly Karai, Leks, and Toorks of other tribes. The Tajik element appears to be small.

In Nishapur the town population forms perhaps $\frac{1}{10}$th of the whole, the nomads about $\frac{1}{5}$th, and the cultivators $\frac{7}{10}$ths of the whole. The former are chiefly Tajiks and Toorks. The nomads are Koords, with a few hundred tents of Belooch.

The cultivators are, in about equal parts, Toork and Tajik. In Subzwar the town population forms about $\frac{1}{8}$th of the whole and the nomads $\frac{1}{10}$th. The cultivators are Tajik, with a few villages of Arabs.

General characteristics of the different elements.

Nomads.

The nomads of the Eastern frontier are hardy, brave and warlike, not much trammelled by religious prejudices or influences, but liable to be moved by sudden impulse and to be easily led out of their ordinary course of avocations. They appear to have still a remnant of tribal and of race feeling that might lead them even now to follow a chief of their tribe or a leader of their race with something of the old enthusiasm. They are, however, few in number and much scattered, and can hardly be accounted a power distinct from the main body of the rural population.

The Koords among them would without doubt be influenced by any general movement of the Koord tribes of Koochan and Boojnoord.

Cultivators.

The cultivators or villagers have much the same physical characteristics, are as simple in their habits as the nomads, and as a rule are honest and industrious, but they have more ties to bind them to the soil, and are much under the influence of religion. The average peasant is, in fact, guided in his social relations and in his relations with the state and with the outer world in general by the voice of the village priest. He regards the irreligion and the vices of the town, which he may live in sight of, with aversion, and looks upon the townsman almost as an unclean being. He has much to justify him in this feeling, for his own domestic life is usually irreproachable, while that of the mass of the townspeople is very much the reverse.

Townspeople.

The townspeople, which term includes scarcely more than the population of the town of Mashad, for the urban populations of the minor districts are inconsiderable, are entirely distinct and different in many respects from the rural. They are bigoted and fanatical without being religious, outwardly observing to some extent the forms of their creed, but in their private life vicious and profligate. They are dishonest and avaricious in their dealings, and turbulent and difficult to control—a result probably of their divided allegiance between the Government and the "Shrine."

General condition of the population.

The population, especially the rural and nomadic, of all the frontier districts having been reduced by the famine far below the numbers that the soil is capable under ordinary conditions of maintaining, its general condition is much ameliorated, and may even be said to be prosperous. The villagers were everywhere well fed and clothed and sheltered. They complained much of the exaction of the same rates of taxation that had been fixed with regard to their circumstances before the famine, when there were more hands and a larger breadth of cultivation, and no doubt the margin of profit on their labour left them is small, but they do not suffer from any want of the necessaries of life. Their lives, liberty, and household goods are also, except in the districts of Turbat and Tursheez and the outlying tracts of Mashad, as secure as in any part of Persia; for the curse of Turkoman ravages is almost re-

moved from the country, and internal dissension has been for many years unknown.

In spite of these most substantial benefits, there is a wide-spread feeling of discontent and a desire for change of condition and change of rule that is made very soon apparent even to a stranger, and is expressed everywhere and by all classes in the same manner.

The birth of the sentiment probably dates far back and it has grown with long years of oppression and misrule to be so universal and all-pervading that the present slight, and to some extent fortuitous, amelioration of the conditions of life can at best but mark the commencement of a new and brighter era in the relations between the people and their rulers.

Relations of the people with the Government.

Of spontaneous loyalty, therefore, the State can expect but little. In the case of the village populations there is also wanting the clan feeling that leads the nomad to look to his chief, who may serve as a link between him and the State.

The actual presence of their sovereign might arouse in the peasantry something of a genuine feeling of loyalty and patriotism, but from what I observed I am inclined to think even this doubtful.

The people have only of late years been brought fully within the influence of the Central Government.

During the reign of the first three Kajar Sovereigns the province was little better than a semi-independent fiefdom, held usually by some prince of the ruling family, as much by a politic disposition of the rival forces by which he was surrounded as by the means of coercion at his disposal. It formed under Ahmed Shah a portion of the Afghan kingdom.

Agha Mahomed Shah and Futti Ali Shah were successively compelled to reconquer the greater portion of it.

Abbas Mirza found full employment for a large army, and as late as 26 years ago the town of Mashad, with a large tract of country and all the mountain districts to the north, was in open rebellion.

It is, therefore, not surprising that a sovereign represented by almost irresponsible and usually venal and incapable agents should have gained as yet but a slight hold on the affections of the people. There is nothing either in the present or the past, no feeling of gratitude and none but the weakest of traditional allegiance, that could serve as a secure bond.

Various influences having effect on the people.

In estimating the chances in favour of the Government of the country, if it should be called upon to bid for the suffrages of the people, there are, however, many points to be considered. The present material condition of the people and their traditions will affect their decision, but not to a greater extent than religious influences, motives of self-interest, sentiments of national pride, or pride of race, or the influence of clanship or of individuals that may be brought to bear upon them. Any one of these may guide the current of public opinion in a community so constituted.

The condition of the people appears to be as above noted improved materially, but is still so bad in consequence of a

negligent, grasping, and unsympathetic administration that, other influences apart, the expressed desire for change is but a natural outcome, of the reality of which it is impossible to entertain any doubt.

Of tradition.

The past history and traditions of the people have also been reckoned as weighing in the scale against their loyalty to the present *régime*. They have been accustomed to be independent under local chiefs, to be subjects also of another kingdom and of semi-independent provincial governments, and at all times to witness rebellion and defiance of authority. It is only of late years and for barely one generation that they have learnt to appreciate the force of a central and supreme government. Even in this short period no doubt a marked change has taken place: tribal ties have been loosened and the influence of local chiefs diminished, while the existence of one central point of authority has come to be acknowledged, but no feelings corresponding to sentiments of loyalty to a dynasty appear to have been aroused or created. The Kajars are talked of commonly as a race of foreign potentates, holding the sovereignty of the country and having the prestige of power and wealth, but with no hold on the sentiments of the people.

Religious influences.

One of the most powerful influences that can be brought to bear upon the people, and especially the rural element, is that of religion; and it is one that may be deemed very much at the disposal of the Government, for the priesthood are interested in its maintenance against external forces. Every hamlet has its "moolla" or group of "moollas," who hold complete sway over the minds of the simple and supersitious peasantry. The larger villages and towns have priests of higher degrees, imams and mujtehids, to whom the village pastors look for guidance and whom they obey almost implicitly, constant communication being kept up by strolling members of the fraternity.

These are again to a great extent in the hands of the magnates of the church at Mashad and at the capital, on whom a direct influence can be brought to bear.

The Government of the country has thus at hand an organisation capable of arousing a large amount of religious enthusiasm in the country, and of creating in its favor a feeling that nothing else is capable of producing.

Judging from what I saw and heard of the condition of the peasantry, their devoutness, bigotry, and respect for the priesthood, it would not be unsafe to affirm that they would respond to a summons to arms coming to them through their priests.

The nomad tribes may be excepted, as the influence of the "moollas" appears with them to be second to that of the chiefs, and the town populations are less easily led by them, though liable to ungovernable outbursts of fanaticism; but the mass of the people, the hardy peasantry, might be relied on to some extent.

Under ordinary circumstances the influence of the church is hostile, more or less overtly, to the Government, for the interests of the two parties in matters internal are hopelessly diverse. The

efforts of the priesthood are constantly directed to a retention of privilege and influence, and of the secular Government to an assumption of complete authority. In matters affecting the actual existence of the State and of the Government, however, the co-operation of the church might be relied upon almost certainly. In the event, for example, of foreign invasion, or of insurrection stirred up by foreign influence, the priests would feel that their interests were identical with those of the Government, and would throw their weight into the scale with it.

Past events may have led the influence of the "moollas" to be doubted, and it is perhaps less than it was. But I am convinced that in the eastern provinces at least they still hold the mass of the people, and would be found followed by large numbers of them if moving in earnest and vigorously urged on to the task.

It is perhaps worthy of note that a belief or suspicion is commonly entertained that the influence of the church, as represented by the principal dignitaries of the capital and elsewhere, is not incapable of becoming an instrument in the hands of an enemy or of receiving an impulse from without, and that thus the Government might find the power on which it relied paralysed by the neutralisation of the proper leaders of any religious movement. In other words, that the chief mujtehids are, with few exceptions, not incorruptible and might be made use of by a foreign power.

Motives of self-interest.

The impulse that would be felt by the peasantry to aid in resisting an invasion from motives of self-interest would depend very much on the nature of the danger. If the threatening enemy were Afghans or any other Asiatics, it is probable that they would easily be induced to take up arms; for they would have good reason to fear a repetition of former scenes of rapine and pillage of which they have still vivid impressions. If left to themselves, it is probable that the majority would prefer flight to resistance, but if led and supported, they would resist, for they are a war-like race still to some extent.

In the face of a European enemy it may be doubted whether they would not see their interest in submission. Resistance would appear more hopeless and less necessary, for Europeans have acquired a character for conducting war on equitable principles, attacking only those whom they find in arms against them and respecting the property of all who hold aloof. If the emphatic assertions of many of the people, both chiefs and peasants, with whom I conversed are to be believed, a European invader would find the people ready not only to submit, but to aid him with supplies and information. "They would meet the Russians," said one, "but with offerings not arms, in their hands." They would, at the worst, have suspicions as to the intentions of a European enemy, which it would rest with him speedily to remove.

National pride.

National pride and race prejudice may in most countries be reckoned to have as much influence as fear of injury in determining the attitude of the people when threatened by foreign

violence, but the first does not appear to exist in any part of Persia among the mass of the people as a sentiment apart from religious bigotry.

Race prejudice also is a feeling that appears to be only acquired or awakened in the East by actual contact of races.

The Persians of Khorassan and of other parts have a dislike to the Afghans and Turks to a great extent based on religious differences, but also on difference of character, habits, &c. Towards Europeans, with whom they have yet scarcely come in contact, there is no such feeling evinced, save in very limited areas; but it would grow no doubt rapidly enough, as the Russians appear to have found in the course of their annexations in the Khanates. The "period of disenchantment" that is found to arrive sooner or later after European occupation marks presumably the spread of prejudices born of differences of habit, thought, and sentiment, and not merely dislike to administrative innovations or religious bigotry, which would be as intense at first as at any later period.

Tribal feeling.

The influences of clanship or of tribal feeling are still powerful in many parts of Persia, and nowhere more so than in Khorassan among the Koords of the northern border; but their utilization depends to a great extent on the relations of the Government with the tribal chiefs. On the Afghan frontier of Khorassan the tribes are so inconsiderable in numbers, and their distinctive organisation has been so crushed out, that it may be doubted whether the chiefs have the power, even if they should have the will, to arouse the old feeling of devotion to the tribe and its leader at the bidding of the central government.

Apart from the fractions of Koords and Eimak clans already mentioned, the only tribes I could hear of on the eastern border as having retained any power of cohesion are the Karai of Turbat-i-Hydari and the Beiat of Nishapoor.

The chief of the Karai, deprived of all power, lives in retirement at Abdoolabad, a village of his tribe, and the Baiyat chief, whose family formerly possessed a great part of Nishapoor, is a pensioner, living a debauched and idle life. Save these two men there were none likely, in virtue of their descent, to be useful as a link between the Government and the people, and I could not hear of any individuals with personal influence and marked and prominent enough to make them efficient instruments in the hands of the Government.

There is one Prince, the Hissam-us-Sultana, uncle of the Shah, whose name is well known and frequently mentioned with respect and liking by all classes.

His presence at a critical time would certainly secure a strong party to the Government, and the policy of his administration having been specially favourable to the maintenance of tribal authority, he would probably succeed in retaining the fidelity of the chiefs.

The conclusions that I would arrive at as regards the population within the limits under consideration are then briefly—that

against an Asiatic enemy the influence of the priests and motives of self-interest, fear, &c., would array a large proportion of the people, and that an European invader, if he failed to secure the neutrality of the leading men of the religious order, would meet with some opposition, though at the worst very slight; and on the other hand would find the people, not in arms, well disposed towards him.

Political sentiments of the people.

The position of the people of the Khorassan border—between Afghanistan supported by England and pervaded by her influence, the Turkoman steppes overshadowed by the power of Russia, and Persia swayed so evidently by foreign impulses,—was almost a guarantee that they would be found in a condition of political unrest and perturbation, but the realisation of the truth was startling. It is scarcely too much to affirm that the very shadow of tranquillity and confidence in the stability of existing political conditions has gone out from the land. Life, rural life, and the business of the towns follow on in their usual course, but the mind of the people is disturbed to its depths, and their leisure moments are devoted to discussion, and speculation on the invariable subject of impending changes in the condition of the country and Government.

Every man, from the chief to the poorest peasant, is a politician, and it is surprising to find with what accuracy of information and appreciation of motives, interests, and principles, the different subjects that present themselves are discussed.

The merchants are, of course, as elsewhere in the East, the centres whence knowledge of the outer world is diffused; and it is mainly by their means that the circulation of new ideas and new impressions is maintained. This condition of excitement and expectation has been presumably growing through a course of years, during which the impending changes have become gradually more sure and appreciable; but it has been worked up to fever heat by the late movements of Russia on the Caspian and Oxus, and by our own demonstration in Seistan, which is very widely discussed. It is evident to all that a contact of the two great powers of Asia is imminent, and they believe firmly that, whatever else may happen, there must be a complete revolution in their own present condition. There is, therefore, little room for surprise that speculation should be rife, and the country ready, in so far that it is prepared in mind, for great changes.

Sentiments regarding Russia.

The position of Russia and her recent advances have, of course, given her a preponderating influence over the imaginations and minds of the people. They hold her power and resources in very high, if not extreme, estimation, and believe that she is actuated by an insatiable greed for the acquisition of territory that nothing can appease. On the other hand, they give her credit for religious toleration and great skill in administration, and in developing trade and manufacture.

Some of the more advanced and crafty politicians affected to believe that Russia is actuated by a sincere friendship for Persia, and wished to aid her in the suppression of her Turkoman enemies

and the acquisition of the provinces that she affects to have lost to Afghanistan. But the pretence was a very flimsy one, and was made easily to expose a deep-rooted conviction that no pledges would prevent the ultimate advancement of the frontier line of Russia into Persia or elsewhere.

Popular information is, as I have said, derived mainly from the mercantile class. There are merchants natives of Persia in all the towns of the border who have visited Russia, and have compared her system with that of Persia, certainly to the disadvantage of the latter. There are also at several points Russian subjects engaged in trade, each one of whom is a centre whence favourable views of Russia and Russian policy are disseminated.

The task is no difficult one with the peasantry at least, for they are already well disposed. Russian grain fed large numbers of the people during the famine; Russian merchants buy up all the cotton and silk the country can raise, and deal honestly; Russian troops have closed the slave markets of Khiva and Bokhara, released the slaves, and make very sharp work of the dreaded Turkomans;—therefore the Russians are powerful and humane, wealthy and honest. Such are the natural and spontaneous deductions of the Khorassan peasant, and the spread of Russian influence and prestige in consequence needs little effort.

Regarding England.

The name of England is equally well known with that of Russia to the poorest peasant. The two powers are in fact inseparably connected in the ideas of the people and form the central figures on their limited political stage. Their conceptions of her are, however far from distinct, and it was matter for surprise to find so high a reputation for power attached to the name as to place her in the light of a worthy rival and competitor with Russia. After being fairly placed in the lists, England was I found endowed in public estimation with several prominent attributes. First and foremost of these was wealth: this is believed to be unbounded, and the excellence and high price of English goods was usually brought up in evidence. "The people who can afford to make "and buy none but the best even of the commonest articles must "be well off," was an inference I heard frequently drawn, and it is a good instance of the manner of reasoning of the people. Russian goods are cheaper and inferior; therefore the Russians are poorer.

With wealth was connected liberality, and frequently praises of English justice and humanity. In short, England, though not holding the commanding position of Russia, is popular—with the peasantry thoroughly so, with other classes to a less extent. The discovery was a surprise to me, and it was not until I had met with repeated and undeniable proof that the truth forced itself upon me. Distant and cut off from all direct communication for so many years, it would have been quite natural to find the name of England barely known outside the principal towns, and I was prepared for little better, but I may, I think, safely affirm that not only is the English name well known, but that if the people

could be polled, the suffrages of the majority would be given in favour of England. The origin of this popularity I can only attribute, as before, to the influence of the Herat Mission, and to a general favourable reputation, based on the nature of the administration in India.

In the existence of any great powers save England and Russia there is no general belief. Persia, Afghanistan, and Turkey, complete the list of nations within the limit of view of the average Khorassani.

Further remarks regarding Mashad.

Some further remarks on the politics of the population of Mashad, viewing that place as a probable objective point of attack by moral forces and as a central point that must be occupied by any power seeking to extend a moral influence over the adjacent districts and on the extension of Russian trade, are, I think, necessary, even at the risk of some repetition.

The population of Mashad I have reckoned at 45,000. Of this number, 15,000 may be reckoned as adult males,—the proportion of adults being increased by losses during the famine of large numbers of infants, and by the fact that the pilgrims and the retainers of the chiefs and officials have, as a rule, no families, but contract temporary marriages with women of the town.

Of this 15,000, about 3,000 may be reckoned as the number of pilgrims residing for a longer or shorter term in the town, 1,500 as the number of servants and dependants of the "Shrine," 1,500 as retainers of residents (chiefs and officials), and 9,000 as shopkeepers, merchants and their dependants, and under other miscellaneous heads. The whole of this population, which includes representatives of almost every Eastern race, may, with the exception of the comparatively small official class and the small number engaged in the transit trade, be said to depend on the "Shrine." There are in all 1,300 shops in the town, supported to a great extent by the annual influx of pilgrims, who also find employment for a large number of hands in other ways. Any changes affecting the "Shrine" would therefore affect the interests of a majority of the population very closely, and great efforts and sacrifices would be made in its defence. The safety of the "Shrine" and of their interests as a consequence secured, it may be doubted whether the people, as a body, would have thought or care for their country and its independence, or for the reigning dynasty.

With the object in view of securing the neutrality of the populace or their quiet acquiescence in any new order of things, it would probably be necessary only to guarantee the safety of the "Shrine" and to ensure that the people should understand that their interests in it would not be affected. To this end it would be sufficient to secure a few of the leading citizens, and the process is now well understood in Persia.

The Mujtehids and other priests are of course, in a community such as that of Mashad, the most influential class; but I did not hear of any very marked character, or of any individual who would be looked upon as the natural leader of the populace.

Annexed is a list of the principal citizens of different classes, including a few of the prominent resident officials. List of citizens.

The political influences referred to as creating so much public excitement on the border act, as might be expected, with redoubled force in the towns; for the sources of information are there superior and there is a speedier interchange of ideas and sentiments.

Speculation as to the probable issue of impending events is largely indulged in, and there were already visible symptoms of an inclination towards a selection of sides in the political game that, it is believed, will shortly commence, and the issue of which will, it is deemed, materially affect the interests of the spectators.

The general impression gained from conversations which necessarily frequently turned on politics—for no other subject is readily admitted—is, that popular belief attributes to Russia designs of aggression, disguised to some extent but still steadily prosecuted, and to England a negligence and *insouciance* that may at any moment be changed for an active opposition, that will fan the smouldering fires of national rivalry into a blaze. Persia is looked upon as the dupe of Russia, playing her game on the faith of hollow promises, and at the same time deceiving the English, who might for their own interests be inclined to aid her. Political creed.

That such a grasp of the situation should be taken by numbers of people living in a remote provincial town may appear strange to those who do not know how intelligently and earnestly all political questions are discussed in these countries; but such is the case, and the political creed above sketched was declared to me frequently in very much the equivalents of the terms I have used, and each point was stated as a settled conviction almost beyond controversy.

The consequences of such beliefs have yet scarcely gone beyond speculation and political agitation; but from what I was able to learn indirectly, though on most reliable authority, I infer that there is an appreciable leaning towards Russia.

The mass of the town population being of a more shifting character, less able to retain impressions and quicker to take fresh ones, than the rural, and there being also no notion of the existence of such a sentiment as national or political morality,* it is not surprising that a majority, especially of the trading classes, should look towards what they believe to be the stronger side in a contest in which both the parties engaged have the same objects and aims in their estimation.

Beyond this the mischief does not appear to have gone, and the advantage gained by Russia is yet scarcely calculable; but there are influences at work that may confirm the present bias and produce a powerful inclination in favour of Russian domination that may extend itself dangerously. The influences I allude to result Influence of the extension of Russian trade.

* When I say this I must except some notable instances of a very true appreciation of the character, designs, and principles of the reputed rival Governments, acquired I know not how. The application of the term *pakiza*, "pure," to English policy in one instance struck me as disclosing a far juster appreciation of the truth than would be looked for from an Oriental.

from the gradual extension of Russian trade southward and eastward, or rather accompany that extension. This extension is no doubt to some extent inevitable and natural, that is, due to the position of Russia on the Caspian; but has nevertheless a political value that is fully appreciated, and leads, I feel assured, to its being perseveringly fostered. The various objections to the absorption by Russia of the trade of Khorassan are so evident, that it is unnecessary to dwell on them; it suffices to note the facts that a commercial monopoly* in the East opens the road to political influence and to an extension of "prestige," and that a centre of commercial operations in the East may easily become a base for the spread of new ideas and aspirations, and when need may arise for political intrigue, these facts will scarcely be controverted.

It may, perhaps, be deemed that the course of extension of Russian trade in Khorassan has been natural, and that consequently its position is unassailable; but I do not myself, judging from local observation and information, believe this to be the case.

Efforts made to foster trade.

The northern ports of the Caspian are the base of Russian trade with the south, and the extension of trade would naturally depend much upon the means of transport across that sea. These would presumably have long remained in a backward state if improvement had been left to private enterprise; for, looking at the state of communications and the productive power of Northern Persia, the sum total of the trade must be even now insufficient to support a line of steamers. As far back, however, as 1860 two different lines, having a fleet of 15 steamers, were running between the Caspian ports. There is good reason to believe that both these are subsidised by the Russian Government on certain conditions connected with the military occupation of the east coast of the Caspian, and their steamers now carry the entire trade of the Caspian. This measure was, of course, calculated to give at once an immense lift to the trade of Khorassan, and is equivalent to a direct patronage by the Indian Government of the line of steamers on the Persian Gulf and the grant of a subsidy to the owners. Arrived in the southern ports of the Caspian, Russian goods find consular agents at several points, Asterabad, Gez, Mashad-i-Sar and Sari. The trade of the maritime provinces might be expected by these means to have passed already entirely into Russian hands; and such is the case, though British goods are still occasionally found, holding their ground only by reason of superior quality.

Caspian steamers.

Consular agents.

The establishment of consular agents on the coast was followed by the posting of a Russian merchant at Shahrood on the highway between Khorassan and Irak, who is supposed to have the rank of Vice-Consul. It is true that he entirely disclaims all connexion with his Government, and the Government officials with him; but I was satisfied from details I learned regarding his business and expenditure, that trade alone did not maintain him

* Or preponderance.

there. His presence, of course, and possibly his occupations are entirely legitimate and unexceptionable, and I take it simply as a proof of the anxiety of his Government to foster an extension of trade operations beyond the mountain barrier of Irak.

Traders.

From Shahrood as a base a line of mercantile agents, Russian-born Armenians chiefly, is found drawn through the fertile central tract of Khorassan. Their stations are Subzwar, Nishapoor, Koochan, and Mashad, and they circulate in pursuance of their vocation into the remotest corners of the province. All of these, save one living at Koochan, appear to have a sufficient business to account for their presence, and he also may be a pioneer of trade only. Though without direct connexion with their Government, all these men without doubt act as purveyors of news to the Consulate at Astrabad, and form petty centres for the diffusion of Russian ideas and influence. Their trade operations have been limited by the depopulation of the country consequent on the famine, and can only increase largely with the slow process of repopulation and the improvement of communications, by which a larger proportion of the irrigated land may be released from the production of grain. There is, therefore, ample time for traders from the south or west to extend their operations and appropriate a fair share of the trade; and this they might, I have been assured, do, if relieved from some of their present burdens and obstacles.

Mashad.

Up to the time of my visit to Khorassan ground had not been broken at Mashad; but there, as elsewhere, Russian goods were to be seen to a greater extent than any other, and the whole atmosphere of the trading interest was Russian. British goods were to be found, but hopelessly undersold by inferior goods from Russia. There was a Russian native agent, an inferior man, employed merely as a news-agent; but no European Russian had visited the town since M. Khanikoff's mission in 1858–59.

M. Ogarodnikoff.

By a somewhat strange coincidence, however, I met at Shahrood while on my way to Mashad a Russian, by name Ogarodnikoff,* who gave himself out as a merchant having a large consignment of goods for Subzwar. Some weeks later M. Ogarodnikoff called on me at Mashad. Meanwhile I had seen in an extract from a St. Petersburgh paper that a man of the same name, a professor of one of the Colleges of the capital, who was employed with the sanction of Government by the "Geographical Association" to make a scientific tour through Khorassan, Cabul, Balkh, and Bokhara, had started for the Caspian and Khorassan. There could be no doubt as to the identity of my acquaintance with "the Professor" referred to, though whether he was professor or whether he was trader was and remained a mystery.

* *Vide ante* p. 21. Mr. O. was attached to this (Colonel Glukbofski's) caravan because of his technical knowledge of surveying. This Russian caravan was to have proceeded to Herat and Cabul, returning through Bamian Kunduz, Balkh, Bokhara, and Khiva to Krasnovodsk, but owing to disturbances in Afghanistan Mr. O. turned back from Mashad. He has published an account of his journey, and the general instructions given him appear in the proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society.

R. M.

He stayed five days at Mashad, and was very well received by the Persian authorities, and on arrival of the caravan of goods his connexion with it was dropped, which looked as if he were really the professor; but, on the other hand, I found that he had no instruments, and in fact little more than the clothes on his back, and spoke no Eastern language.

So far as I could understand through an indifferent interpreter, he intimated that he was employed by a St. Petersburgh firm in making inquiries with the view of opening direct trade with Mashad and the adjacent countries, and this, I dare say, was not very far from the truth; but I am inclined to believe from the manner of his reception that he was employed by his Government, and from the nature of his inquiries at Mashad, that his business was to obtain information with reference to some projected extension of trade operations in Eastern Khorassan and especially Mashad under official patronage.

Opening of a shop at Mashad.

The caravan above-mentioned arrived shortly after M. Ogarodnikoff, and with it a European Russian, a man of good appearance, and well-informed. He strangely enough denied all connection with his compatriot. The goods he brought were a miscellaneous selection, for which apparently no very ready sale was found; and he expressed his intention, before my departure, of quitting Mashad, and of relinquishing his intention of opening a business there. I have, however, since heard that he is still there, under the patronage of Mirza Saeed Khan, "Mutwulli Bashi" (guardian of the Shrine), and has sent to Russia for a fresh stock of goods.

Possibly these operations have no connection with the Government, but I am inclined to believe that they have, and that the intention is to establish permanently at Mashad an official who will both act as a medium of communication with the people and enable his employers to watch effectively the course of affairs in that direction. Such an agency, though ostensibly merely mercantile, would be of much political advantage. From the above-noted facts, which are, I believe, true indications of the tendency of Russian commercial policy, there is, I think, only one conclusion to be drawn,—and that is, that much has been done, and with a very set purpose, to stimulate trade, and thereby to obtain a monopoly in the markets of Khorassan to the injury of British interests, political as well as commercial.

An extension of trade, however, whether entirely natural or not, can only be met by a similar extension, and to compass this, by an increase of the facilities for transport necessary to place British goods in competition on fair terms. There are, however, physical difficulties of great magnitude in the path of progress of British trade eastward, and it can only enter the field on equal terms if aided in some such manner as the Caspian trade appears to have been aided. Improved communications between the sea and the Persian highlands, and some provisions for sale and distribution of goods under Consular protection are needed, and would, no donbt, enable English merchants to place English goods in the markets of Khorassan at remunerative prices. It is worthy

of note in this connection that some classes of English goods are able to hold their own and fetch a fair price, after bearing the cost of camel carriage from such distant ports as Bunder Abbass and Kurrachi. This being the case, there can be little doubt as to the result of the provision of modern means of transport on shorter lines.

Principal Mujtehids, Moolahs, &c.

1. Hajee Mirza Nasroollah—An old man said to have much influence in the town and representative of the whole body.
2. Hajee Mirza Ibrahim—Known as the Mujtehid-i-Subzwari, Principal of the Madrassa-i-Subzwariha, a man much respected and having much influence.
3. Hajee Sheikh Abdool Rahim.
4. Mirza Mohamad Sadik—Known as Mirza Nazir, a lineal descendant of the Imam, and holding a position equal to that of the Mutwalli Bashi, the secular Governor of the Shrine.
5. Mirza Hidayat-ullah Imam Joomah.
6. Hajee Mirza Zahib-oola—In charge of the seals of the Shrine.
7. Hajee Moollah Asad-oollah Peshnimaz.
8. Moollah Abdoor Rahman Sheikh-ul-Islam.
9. Shahzada Abul Hassan Mirza Sheikh-ul-Raees—A man still young and holding most liberal and enlightened views. He has the reputation of being exceedingly able and learned, and has a rare character for integrity and high principle. He is the son of the late Mohamed Taki Mirza. His brother, Shahzada Mohamad Hashim, is Moyeen-u-Towliya or assistant of the Mutwalli Bashi.

Chief Merchants.

The chief merchants of Mashad are, strangely enough, all foreigners, residents of the town, and having some influence.

1. Syud Mulook, Candahari.
2. Hajee Abdul Naki, Candahari.
3. Syud Sarwar, Pesheeni—A man who has been employed by Sirdar Yakoob Khan as a commercial and political agent.
4. Hajee Ibrahim, Mervi—A Russian subject from Bokhara, Agent of the Russian Government at Mashad. A man of some substance.
5. Hajee Agha, Buzurg.
6. Hajee Moollah Ahmad, Kashani.
7. Hajee Abul Kasim, Ispahani.
8. Hajee Mohamad Hassan, Herati.
9. Hajee Mahomed Takee, Herati.

Resident Officials.

1. Hajee Mustashar, Mustowfi.—A native of Jouven, reported to have much ill-gotten wealth, and to be corrupt, avaricious and bigoted; but the bigotry of such men appears to resolve itself into a question of interest and not of principle.
2. Shahzada, Nayyir-u-Dowla Parvez Mirza Naib-ul-Hukumat —A son of Futteh Ali Shah. An old man. He holds the civil government of Mashad, and is titular Governor of Nishapoor. A well disposed man.
3. Sirteep Abbas Khan, Herati—A political refugee, a man of ability in favour with the Persian Government. Employed in Seistan for some time, and now Governor of Bakharz. The Sirteep suffered somewhat from his attachment to the British cause in Herat, but might still be useful.

Known as Abbas Khan—Rayhan, his mother, having been a prostitute.

4. Mustafa Gooli Khan, Colonel of the Karai Regiment of Turbat—A man in favour with the late Government, and having influence in his district. Was selected as one of the pacificators sent to Seistan in 1874.
5. Yusuf Khan, Hazara, Sirteep, commonly known as Moolla Yusuf from his literary tastes. He has the reputation of being the most noted robber on the border. Of late years he has remained in Mashad, living on his pay as Colonel in the Persian service and his professional gains. He was formerly very wealthy, but was imprisoned and plundered six or seven years ago by the Government on suspicion of treasonable communication. He is a staunch Sunni, and for this and the reasons above noted loyal to his Government only by interest. His sons, Baba Khan and Ismail Khan, incline to the Shiah faith through marriage connections, and will probably settle down as Persian subjects. The section of the Zaymat-Sunni Hazara tribe under Yusuf Khan numbers about 2,000 families, and receive lands and pay for 1,000 horse.
6. Bahadoor Khan—A chief of the family of the Khans of Deregez, and a man of influence by reason of his birth and connections. He was for a short term Governor under Feridoon Mirza of Merv, but was expelled by the Turkomans. He lives now in retirement at Mashad on a large pension of Rupees 12,000 per annum from the Persian Government, and some private means. Being idle and somewhat disaffected, he might be open to intrigue.
7. Ali Mardan Khan—Chief of the section of the Taymoori nomads of the border.
8. Ataoolla Khan—Chief of the Taymoori of the Mashad district; about 1,000 tents.

   These two chiefs are both in employ and pay of the Persian Government.
9. Allahyar Khan, Jamshidi—A chief of 500 families of the Jamshidi.

No. 9.

Notes on the Condition of the Districts, Chiefships, and Tribes of the North-eastern Frontier of Persia.

No. 23, dated 29th May 1875.

From Captain the Hon. G. C. Napier, on Special Duty in Persia, to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I have the honour to submit herewith, for the information of Government, some notes on the condition of the districts, chiefships, and tribes of the north-eastern frontier of Persia, which the opportunity of my return journey from Mashad along the frontier in the months of October and November last enabled me to collect.

I am indebted to Kazee Syud Ahmed for much valuable and zealously rendered assistance, more especially in the collection of information regarding the Turkoman tribes and Asterabad, at which place he preceded me travelling by the direct route.

Section I.

District of Asterabad.
Ditto Shahrood.
Chiefship of Nardin.

Appendices.

Divisions of Asterabad.
Leading men of Asterabad.
Divisions of Shahrood-Bostam.

Notes.

Tracts included under the term north-east frontier.

Main physical features.

The term north-east frontier may be held conveniently to include the districts of Astrabad, Shahrood, the petty Chiefship of Nardin, the Chiefships of Bujnoord, Koochan, Deregez, and Kelat-i-Nadiri, the Attrek-Gurgan Plain, and the "Atak" or hill skirts of Akhal, Deregez, and Kelat-i-Nadiri, a tract of country stretching from the 54th to the 61st degrees of longitude, and including the entire north-eastern ramifications of the Alburz Chain.

The mountains.

From Asterabad east, the Alburz forms an almost unbroken barrier, varying in width from about 20 miles to 80 miles between the Turkoman plain to the north, and the great central desert of Persia to the south. Its ridges run at first eastward bending gradually south-east to the banks of the Heri Rood, and enclose wide arid valleys opening out to the plain, and having an average elevation of 4,000 feet.

There are along the chain not less than 16 peaks rising from 8,000 to 10,000 feet in height. The northern slopes of the mountains and their bases are covered with dense forest for 80 to

100 miles eastward from Asterabad. Elsewhere the range is bare or covered but thinly with a stunted growth of juniper.

There are few springs and a scanty herbage, springing up after the melting of the winter snows and withering early in summer.

The mountain slopes devoid of any covering of soil disclose everywhere the secrets of their formation, giving the scenery a most strange though forbidding and cheerless aspect.

In the lower features of the chain to the south-east, and there only, volcanic rocks, traps and granites occur and predominate.

The large masses of the central line of the chain are formed for the most part of grey limestones; and to the north-east high jagged ridges and spurs of slate fall abruptly into the valleys.

Passes.

The passes are few and bad, there being only one really practicable line in the whole length of the chain, viz., that by the Gurgan Valley and the plateaux at its head, leading directly on to the Nishapoor plain. The importance of this natural passage through a range elsewhere impassable to any modern army cannot be overrated or dwelt on too often. It forms for an army advancing from the Caspian eastward an easy alternative to the scantily watered Atak route, exposed all along one flank to the attacks of the Turkoman horsemen.

The occupation of the one short defile of the Gurgan would secure an indisputable passage through the heart of the barrier and on to the table land, whence an ordinary carriage may be driven to Herat.

The "Kavir."

To the south of the range lies the "Kavir" or central desert of Persia, which, though little known, may be regarded as an impassable barrier to the passage of troops southward.

Attrek-Gurgan Plain.

North of the range (and east from Asterabad) for 70 miles stretches the Attrek-Gurgan Plain, having an extreme width from the base of the mountains to the edge of the desert north of the Attrek of about 60 to 70 miles, and narrowing to 40 or 50 towards the coast. The Gurgan and Attrek, fed mainly by the drainage of the great limb of the range that is pushed out to the north-west, and the Kara-Soo and other small streams from the south, traverse and fertilize it.

The "Atak."

From the Attrek-Gurgan Plain, either skirting the outer range by a rough scantily watered road, or crossing it north-east by the pass of Kari Killa on the Upper Attrek tributary, the great plain stretching from the base of the chain to the shores of the Aral is reached.

For about 150 miles the mountains bounding this plain on the south (known as the Koh-i-Atok and marked in our maps as the Kapet Dagh, a name unknown on the spot) rise in an abrupt unbroken line of heights above the plain which extends to the horizon in an expanse so level as to have from their summits the appearance of a boundless ocean.

Persian border line.

The north-west border of Persia being one of her undefined frontiers, the attempts that have been made to draw a line around it are delusive. No such demarcation has ever been made, or either projected or attempted, by the Persian Government or the local

chiefs, and certainly none is admitted or imagined by the people to exist.

A line denoting actual possession may be drawn very widely differing from any that I have seen laid down, also a line marking the fair limit of the extension of Persian influence and sovereignty. The direction of these I will proceed to indicate as clearly as possible after a few words regarding the "natural boundary" now somewhat talked of. Natural boundary.

The base of a chain of mountains forming a real natural barrier, as does the Alburz Chain, may seem at first sight a far better boundary than a line drawn at will across a plain, almost unbroken, and unmarked by any natural feature; but when the plain is found to interpose a far more efficient and impassable barrier than the mountains, the conditions of the question are changed; and this is the case in the present instance.

Khorassan and Persia have been separated from the Oxus Valley and the Aral by an expanse of waterless sandy desert far more effectually than by the most rugged mountain chain, and these deserts therefore form the natural boundary.

To overstep these deserts is as much a violation as the occupation of a pass in a mountain boundary would be, and would be justifiable only on the assumption that the interests of both parties would be served thereby.

The grasp laid by Russia on the Attrek tract west and south of the great desert is apparently justified on these grounds, for thence only, it is said, a check can be effectually placed on the common enemy, the Turkomans. Communication between the Caucasian provinces and Khiva must be established from the Balkhan Bay or Mankishlak and not from the Attrek. The assumption of Persian interest in Russian coercion of the Turkomans and her acquiescence in it, opens a question into which I am not called to enter; but I have learnt that, on the spot, an entirely adverse feeling and policy prevail.

Admitting the mountain barrier to be the better border for the true interests of both parties directly concerned, it is in itself an efficient one save at its western extremity, where the mountains run at some distance from the coast and leave a strip of plain, across which an arbitrary boundary line must be drawn.

The border line of actual Persian possession can only be approximately laid down, and in distinguishing between it and the line up to which Persian influence extends, the line of inhabited villages on the border may be conveniently taken. Border line of actual possession.

Proceeding eastward from the Caspian, the Kara-Soo, beyond which there are no villages, may be taken as the boundary as far Ak-Kala, a Persian outpost five miles north of Asterabad. This stream rises in the mountains about 30 miles east from Astrabad and winds first north-west and then west for 40 or 50 miles, falling into the sea 6 or 7 miles south of Khoja Nafas at the mouth of the Gurgan. At the point where the Kara-Soo is crossed north of Asterabad, it is girth deep, with a width of 50 or 60 yards, and a sluggish current.

From Ak-Kala the line would skirt the forest which stretches from the base of the mountains into the plain with a varying width of from 6 to 12 miles, and the village lands of Nowdeh, Katool, Maintaloo, Dur Kala, Finderisk, and Nowdeh, the last village on the plain, lying at the foot of the hills on a small tributary of the Gurgan.

The Goklan settlement of Sangar, three farsakhs east from Nowdeh, though now permanent, may be considered as merely a Goklan "obah."

From Nowdeh east a line skirting the base of the mountains and the Kohsar district for 20 miles would indicate the boundary. Beyond Kohsar lies the Kalposh plateau, along the crest of which the line may be drawn.

Between the Kalposh village Nanik and the western frontier villages of Bujnoord extends a tract of barren uninhabited hilly country. The boundary line of actual possession should, therefore, be deflected southward to the frontiers of Jah Jerm and Isferayeen, and skirting the southern base of the outer range of Alburz as far as the Derbund-i-Hissar be carried again north-north-west to Kala Khan, the frontier hamlet of Simulghan, and thence along the left bank of the Germe Khans or Attrek to the junction of the Kushkhana stream north of Bujnoord. After following this stream for some miles the line should strike the outer or Atak range, and follow its crest, including the villages of the Kushkhana plateau and Durbadam, then descend east of Gawars into the "Atak," and still following the line of the mountains at a distance of 15 to 20 miles from their base, terminate at Ak-Derbund, or at Sarraks as the Persian tenure of the latter place be deemed to give possession of the country in its rear or not.

South of the line thus drawn every foot of the country is in undisputed possession of Persia, and is for the most part now little liable to Turkoman incursion. Certainly no claim to any portion of it could be made on the ground of Turkoman tenure.

Goklan boundary.

A line drawn north from Nowdeh to the Gunbazi Kaooss which lies due north, then south along left bank of the Gurgan up to the base of the hills, and thence along the crest of the hills to the north of the watershed to Simulghan, would include all the pastures of the Goklan Turkomans and the country held by them undisputably, though subject to the incursions of their Tekke and Yemoot neighbours.

Boundary line of Persian influence.

The second line, the line up to which, if not beyond, Persian influence is felt and acknowledged by the tribes, and was till a late date the only foreign influence affecting their movements at all seriously, should be drawn up the Attrek and its tributaries, the Chandyr and Ab-i-Soont, and thence along the crest of the Atak range till it meets the first line.

This line, although it includes the pastures of the Goklan and of a great portion of the Yemoot, and a large tract of country totally uninhabited but dotted with ruins of Persian villages and caravanserais, is no political fiction, but really indicates the limits

up to which at least Persia is recognized as having certain sovereign rights.

In noting my observations regarding the relations of Persia with the Turkoman tribes I will record any facts bearing on the question of her proper limits in their direction that may have come to my notice. It suffices here to state that the second line that I have drawn was both tacitly admitted and actually affirmed before me by officials, to be the proper boundary line of Persia. Such admissions and affirmations may not be deemed to count for much, but they served to indicate the opinions entertained on the spot.

Notes on the various border districts and chiefships taken in detail.

Having traced approximately the frontier line, I will proceed to take each district on the line in detail, giving such information as I was able to gather regarding the material condition and domestic or intertribal politics of the population, its resources, &c., and also similar information regarding the Turkoman tribes on the border, reserving for separate notice the larger questions of the relations subsisting between Russia, Persia, and the Turkomans.

Relations subsisting between Russia, Persia, and the Turkomans reserved for separate report.

ASTERABAD.—The district of Asterabad is bounded on the west by Mazanderan, from which it is divided by the Gooloogah stream, 30 miles west from Asterabad. On the south-west and south it includes a large scantily peopled mountainous tract bounded by the Shahrood District and the district of Firozkoh. To the south-east and east it is bounded by Shahrood and Nardin. Its boundary line to the north has been already traced.

Boundaries.

The appended list of the belooks or divisions of the district contains a brief description of each separate tract. A few words therefore will suffice to convey a general impression of the nature of its surface.

List of divisions of the district.

The greatest width of the district, excluding the tributary Turkoman tracts from the Kara-Soo to the borders of Shahrood, is about 40 miles; its greatest length from Gooloogah east to the limits of Kohsar, about 100 miles. By its natural features it is conveniently divided into two longitudinal sections, the northern or lower consisting of plain, the southern or upper of mountain. The plain between the Bay of Ashoorada and the mountains, known as the Anizan Belook, has a width of about eight miles; between the Kara-Soo and the mountains it widens to about 12 miles; thence eastward to Nowdeh, 50 miles in a direct line, it maintains a uniform width of about 10 miles. Nearly the whole of this area is covered with dense forest. There is a strip of "open" towards the Kara-Soo and some considerable clearings to the east, which together might perhaps amount to one-fifth; the remaining four-fifths is uninhabited, and almost impenetrable, for where the forest is thin a dense growth of thorn-bushes takes its place.

Extent and nature of country.

NOTE.—The *average* width of the district would be scarcely more than 12 miles.

Plain.

The mountainous section includes to the west the upper course of the Nikah river, the mountains Shahkoh (10,000 feet*), Jehan Numa (8,900 feet), and Gez Dagh (7,300 feet), with all their valleys and plateaux. Eastward it takes in only the lower

Mountains.

* Approximate elevation.

northern slopes of Alburz till it reaches the valley of Nowdeh, where the Kohsar plateau stretches out again to some width, 10 to 15 miles. More than half of this area must be covered with forest, the remainder is chiefly mountain pasture and barren rock. Save in the Kohsar, where there are some fine stretches of corn-land, the cultivated area would bear but a small proportion to the forest and waste.

Routes and roads.

Asterabad is rendered by natural obstacles peculiarly difficult of access. It is most open towards the Caspian, but there still intervene between the town and the shore of the Ashoorada Bay 14 miles of low swampy forest land, over which the *impedimenta* of an army could not be transported without the construction of a road and numerous bridges. Troops landed at Gumushtuppa might, by a detour, reach Astrabad without much difficulty, save in time of flood. The distance would be 30 miles. The Anizan Belook, forming the western border, is covered with impenetrable forest, and traversed by numerous small streams flowing in deep and muddy beds.

The Shah Abbas causeway was once an efficient highway, though it is now so completely ruined by neglect that the traffic of the country passes on either side of it through deep sloughs, which are, however, preferable to the broken pavement of the road with its treacherous pitfalls. The nature of the streams flowing invariably in narrow and permanent beds, and the unlimited supply of wood at hand would facilitate the construction of a temporary road for the passage of troops; and a well raised and drained permanent way might with moderate care be kept open at all seasons.

A full description of the main line of communication between Teheran and Asterabad will be found in the annexed report on routes.

Across the Alburz.

To the south the district is cut off from easy access with the highlands of Khorassan and Irak by the Alburz. The passes leading directly south across the range are all exceedingly difficult, and could not be traversed by a properly equipped army without much delay and labour in road-making.

Exclusive of village paths, which are for the most part fit only for mule traffic, there are three principal lines that might be improved into fair military roads. The first passes through Anizan, the village Gooloogah, and Mazanderan as far as the Pul-i-Nikah, where it turns north-east, following the Nikah or Shumsherbur stream up to its source. The second follows the same line as far as Gooloogah, and then turning south over a great forest-covered spur meets the former at Radkan. The third crosses the mountains due south-east of Asterabad by the Kuzlook pass. A description of all three routes is given in the Appendix on routes.

To the east the district is shut in by the hilly country drained by the Gurgan and Attrek; but there is one magnificent natural pass through the chain which would facilitate the opening of

communication with the eastern provinces. Some details regarding it are also given in the Appendix on routes.

To the south-east there is a route across the Gurgan Plain and up the Attrek and its tributaries, the Chandyr and Ab-i-Soont, and past Kari Kala to the Akhal "Atok," which will, according to native information, be found to present many advantages over the desert route by Kizil Arvat.

Northwards Asterabad and the Attrek-Gurgan Plain are shut in by the desert that extends to the foot of the Ust-Urt plateau, and north-east to the Oxus.

There are several routes across this desert, of which, however, I am unable to give any fresh information; one of them, from Chekishlar north by the Aiden Well, and thence as far as Orta Kiua, has been traversed by a Russian column, the retreat of which appears to have resulted from failure of baggage animals, rather than from want of water.

The difficulties of any such routes are nevertheless, no doubt, enormous, a fact that enhances the value of the desert steppe as a political boundary.

Population.

A rough estimate of the population of Asterabad is given in the annexed list of the belooks of the district, Appendix A., and is, I believe, as near the truth as it is possible to get. The rural population is calculated at an average of 100 houses to each village, and five souls to each house.

The urban, or the population of Asterabad itself, is taken from an official computation of the number of houses now inhabited, said to be 1,000; six souls are allowed to each house as one result of the famine was the immigration of a number of starved out people from the highlands who remain in various servile capacities.

Eastern Belooks.

The population of the eastern belooks—Katool, Finderesk, and Kohsar—I estimate at about 31,000, which may be a little under the mark.

Western.

Anizan is, for its extent, thinly peopled, and Shahkoh Sawar has scarcely any population; its quota for the Asterabad regiment being only 130 men. The tracts about Asterabad and the base of the hills have a comparatively large population.

Character.

The people of the eastern belooks are chiefly Gerayli Turks, and speak Turkish as well as Persian. They are a fine hardy race, of good physique, and for the most part well armed. They have a great reputation for courage, and I believe a well deserved one. It was impossible to look at their fine active forms and bold faces, and to note the speed and wonderful endurance with which they made their way through the tangled forest and thorn brakes on either side of the line of march, and to doubt that they would, with proper arms and leading, give a good account of their Turkoman enemies, or in fact, on their own ground, of any troops that might be brought against them.

Military qualities of the men of the eastern belooks.

There was not a man of the several hundred peasant guards with me at various times under a high average standard in size, development, and activity, and every man was undoubtedly full of self-

confidence and daring. With their keen eyes piercing the depths of the forest, gun in hand, and hatchet in constant use, they would keep for hours on the flanks and ahead of a party, marching a fair pace on a cleared path. It would be difficult to find, in fact, in any country better raw material for foot soldiers, and the confidence that they would lose when removed from their native forests should be easily restored to them by discipline.

The conditions under which these admirable natural qualities in the population have been produced and fostered having greatly altered, another generation will find the men of the eastern border in much the same peaceable condition and temperament as the peasantry of Mazanderan, but in the meantime they might be utilized by Persia in the extention of her frontier to the Attrek.

The task would be, I was assured, gladly taken up by them and carried through well, for they have the necessary moral equality with their enemy, which is more than can be said of any other men in Persia, save the Koords.

Estimating the population of the eastern belooks at 30,000 men, about 6,000 to 7,000 adults would be found fit to bear arms and ready at very short notice. In the Kohsar, I was informed, 1,500 men might be had in a day; at Nowdeh 1,000; and at Ramayan 1,000. Between Finderisk and Katool, where the population is denser, an equal number would, no doubt, be found as readily.

The Hajilar clan.

The glens, leading from the Kohsar plateau to the plain held by the Goklan Turkomans, are inhabited by a small tribe of Turk, or by one account, Belooch origin, who from the natural strength of their country and the light hold the Persians have on the Gurgan plain, are able to maintain a certain amount of independence. It was lately found so difficult to control them from Asterabad that they have been handed over to the tender mercies of the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord, who is able to reach them if necessary.

They have, however, submitted and paid the arrears of the tribute due. They number 1,000 tents, and have an immense local reputation for courage, strength, and expertness with their guns.

In the western belooks the population is slightly more mixed; there are many Tajiks and some few villages of Kajars, also two villages, Yangi Mohala and Mohammadabad, near Astrabad, chiefly of Hazara Barbars immigrants of an ancient date. There is a mixture also of Taths, a tribe apparently of Persian origin found in larger numbers in Mazanderan. Though inferior to the people of the east in appearance and in reputation, the peasantry of the west are hardy, fairly armed, and well acquainted with the forest paths and the proper modes of bush fighting. A levy *en masse* there would produce about the same number of armed men as in the east of the district.

The town population is very mixed—there are Tajiks, Tajars, and Turks, and a number of families of Afghans and Hazaras. It increased slightly during the famine, but is still far below

what it once was, as is evidenced by large spaces within the enclosure covered with ruins and vacant habitations.

The material condition of the Asterabad population is, as might be expected, far superior to that of the population of Khorassan. The peasants in the eastern and mountain tract, and the lowland villages, from which an annual immigration to the "Yielak," or summer quarters is customary, are physically as fine or nearly so as the average Khorassan peasant, and they have also a robust healthy appearance. About Asterabad and on the coast haggard fever-worn faces are, however, common, and the evil effect of the climate is most marked on the children. All classes appeared to be well fed and sufficiently clothed, and a very large proportion so clothed as to show that they had little need to work with their hands. Material condition.

The last 20 years has seen a very great change in the condition of the country.

The village of Finderesk, for instance, was, within the memory of men, still young, a small collection of reed huts as often deserted for a safe retreat in the neighbouring mountains as occupied. The clearings were few and of small extent, and rice and wheat, sufficient only for home consumption, raised. It has now with neighbouring hamlets 1,000 families. There are several substantial stone houses with neat tiled roofs, paved court-yards, and large rooms, and the houses of less pretension are equally comfortable. They stand usually at some little distance apart, for being built of wood and cane, and having each a rick-yard and stack of fuel, there is some danger of fire. The whole village thus covers perhaps a square mile or more of ground. Neat orchards hedged or fenced with cane-work, paddocks filled with fine cattle, well raised and drained pathways, and extensive cultivated clearings, give an appearance of comfort and substance; while the surplus produce of the village finds its way as far as Jah Jerm and Asterabad, and a large and increasing area is sown with cotton. Village of Finderesk.

This well-to-do village of Finderesk has many counterparts both in the eastern and western belooks.

There were, in fact, signs in all parts of a steady progress in material prosperity due to increased security and an increased demand for the productions of the land, causes that will, it may be presumed, continue to work out the regeneration of the country. Traces of ruined villages and the lines of old kanats are common enough even in the depths of the forest, but these are relics of the period of prosperity enjoyed by the country under the Safavian kings, the return of which may not be expected save under vastly improved conditions of government.

Though the state of the country, as regards security, is much improved, as is shown by the free use of the Koozlook Pass across the mountains to Shahrood, formerly never taken without strong escort, there remains much room for further improvement.

The policy of the Persian Government towards the Turkomans, nominally subject, is characterised by great weakness. Their

thefts and plunderings, though now attempted only on a small scale, are condoned with the view of winning their allegiance.

As a set-off, the revenue of the greater portion of the villages of the district has been remitted, and an additional burden thus laid on the general revenues of the country; for a force for the defence of the border has still to be maintained and paid.

Political condition.

Relations with Turkomans.

Though the times are so much changed and their Turkoman neighbours are not the scourge they once were to the peasantry of Asterabad, a feeling unmistakeably evinced in word and look of the most bitter hatred still exists. The peasant regards the reiving nomad as a deadly enemy, and his hatred is but little mingled with fear. The half superstitious dread of the Tartar horsemen that unmans the Persian of the interior is unknown to him; he regards him only as a dangerous foe, whom he can always meet on equal terms, even on his own ground.

The "Charwars" or nomadic Yamoots are alone the object of this feeling, for the nomad when he has settled down and fairly joined the "Chomoor" or agricultural class, becomes a neighbour, with whom an intercourse is maintained more or less close and friendly, as his connection with the plundering camps is distant or otherwise. I found in several instances headmen of the "Chomoor" Yamoot camps among my guards, and learnt that they frequently made common cause with their neighbours of the border villages. Their interests become in fact identical, when settled near each other and engaged in the same pursuits.

This fact is an important one as bearing on the future prospects of the country, for it affords ground for a presumption that any efforts that may be made to settle the southern sections of the Yamoots in Persia will meet with no such difficulties as might have been anticipated from antagonism of races.

Towards their own Government, in spite of their more prosperous condition, I observed that the feelings of the people were as hostile as in other parts, and it is scarcely too much to say that they are entirely open to Russian influence, and would accept Russian rule as a deliverance. The evils of a weak and unsympathetic government have been as keenly felt on this border as in the eastern districts, and the contrast between the Russian system and their own is more fully appreciated. The extension of Russian rule is regarded apparently by all classes as inevitable and a matter of time merely, and the prospect was regarded with satisfaction only mingled with regret that their future rulers were not of the "true faith." Possibly actual contact will arouse feelings of antagonism, but to judge from the spirit of the people Russian annexation would be followed by the voluntary submission of all the important classes.

Russian influence has for years been at work in the country, and the "sense of the inevitable," which alone must go far to crush out all idea of opposition, is aided by a firm belief in the superior material advantages that would be secured by Russian rule; among the first and greatest of which is believed to be complete relief from troubles at the hands of the Turkomans.

"May the Russians come to-morrow, if their coming will stay "the hands of these descendants of the Evil One," was a sentiment reiterated so often, and with so much fervour, that it would without doubt have great effect in paving the way to a peaceful subjugation. Russian influence has permeated the country so completely that it was a matter of no surprise to find that the people believe in and know of no other power. The power that makes light of the Turkomans' cannot, in their imagination, have any equal upon earth, and it would be no easy task to teach them to the contrary.

Resources.

The question of the resources that the district of Asterabad possesses for the supply of an army is a most important one, and one about which I had the utmost difficulty in obtaining any sort of information. In other parts the grain-assessments of villages had been a sort of guide to an estimate of the surplus produce, but these have been all or nearly all remitted in Astrabad, and the large area that is capable of bearing grain crops without irrigation raises a greater difficulty; for the measure afforded by the quantity of available water in the dry highlands is here lost.

Under these circumstances, it was impossible to arrive at any figures likely to indicate the quantity of grain that a force collected in the country would find available for its subsistence, and I am forced to fall back on a few general observations.

Famine in the highlands failed to produce any due extension of grain culture.

In the first place it is worthy of note that, though there is an immense area of culturable waste, both irrigated and unirrigated, capable of bearing wheat crops, and no great scarcity of hands, even the pressure of five years' famine in the neighbouring highlands failed to produce any but the most moderate extension of grain culture in the Persian villages or the Turkoman camps. The difficulties of export across the Alburz, over which nothing worthy of the name of a road exists, and the insecurity of the roads along the border, by which only the easier passes at Asterabad and Nowdeh can be reached, were the chief obstacles to a remunerative export of corn, and to these obstacles there can be no doubt the loss of many thousand lives in Khorassan may be charged. In the Gurgan tracts, I was informed, that in the autumn of 1872, the time when the famine was at its height, wheat was in such abundance that no market could be found for it in the country, and it did not repay exportation.

Although grain was dear enough in the highlands and plentiful in Asterabad at the time I passed through the country, so far as I could ascertain but a small quantity was exported from Nowdeh and the Gurgan to Jah Jarm. At Shahrood prices remained double those ruling in the town of Asterabad itself, and at the same time wheat had been shipped at Gez for the distant port of Astrakhan.

Rice.

The second staple of food in the district, and in fact all along the southern shores of the Caspian, is rice. In the western belooks little else is grown, the wheat-growing tracts being chiefly to the east about Finderisk and Katool. A large quantity is exported to Shahrood and to Russia from Gez. A rough estimate

of the quantity sent to Shahrood during the last season gives 2,500 kharwars = 120 tons, the exportation being confined mainly to the two months that intervene between the harvest in October and the closing of the passes. The greater portion of this would, of course, be at the disposal of a force holding the country and main lines of communication. The Goklan and the Yamoot "Choomoors" grow, I am informed, a considerable quantity of wheat beyond their own requirements for sale and barter to the "Charwars" or nomad Yamoots; but this source of supply would not be available to a Russian force unless they should succeed in securing the hearty co-operation of the tribes.

Resources of Asterabad insufficient for a large force.

From the resources of the district of Asterabad alone it would thus appear that a large force could hardly be supported for any length of time, and could certainly not rely upon the district as a base, from whence a continuous supply for a distant expedition might be collected. Improvements of communications will, no doubt, lead to a great extension of the corn-growing area, and of the capabilities of the district for supply as a consequence; but such improvements progress slowly in Persia.

Large armies have nevertheless, within very recent times, been marched into and maintained for some months in and about Asterabad.

Not more than eight years ago a Persian force, estimated at 40,000 men, crossed the mountains from Shahrood, and passed into the Gurgan plain from the Kalposh plateau, a route comparatively easy, but still scarcely a practicable one for the supply of so large an army in the field. I found on inquiry that this force, though aided to some extent by the Goklan, had not subsisted on the produce of the country, nor on supplies brought up from a distance along their original line of march, but had at once opened communication with Asterabad, an operation facilitated by the flight of the Yamoots across the Gurgan, and had obtained supplies from Mazanderan and the hilly country known as the Hazar Jarib, both of which are difficult of access from Asterabad.

Forces of Asterabad—Regular.

There were, up to a late date, but two regular regiments in garrison at Asterabad, the regiment of Firozkoh, 800 strong, and the regiment of Hazar Jarib, 700 strong; both recruited in the adjacent mountains. Of the latter a detachment of 350 men is stationed permanently at Ak-kala, five miles north of Asterabad, the only post in the district for regular troops.

Irregular.

Of irregulars there are 1,322 foot soldiers enrolled, armed, and paid by the Government, and employed as guards in the different villages on the border, as the need for their services arise. Being well acquainted with the country, inured to the climate, and experienced in warfare of a guerilla nature, they would form a good local regiment and the nucleus of an efficient local militia.

There are also 400 irregular horse enrolled and distributed at Finderesk, Katool, Asterabad, and Nowkhandan. These are indifferently mounted and armed, and in every way inferior to the Koords and Hazaras of Khorassan, and in consequence are inefficient for the defence of the border. The Governor of Asterabad

is therefore obliged to rely for protection on indirect assistance from the Elkhanee of Bujnoord and the Chief of Nardin in the shape of retaliatory raids. The very valuable body of irregulars that is to be found in every village in the eastern belooks especially has been before referred to. A levy *en masse* would no doubt produce from 12,000 to 14,000 efficient men.

Artillery. The artillery of Asterabad consisted up to a late date of six light field guns.

Defences. The town of Asterabad is defended by the usual mud wall, built on a good bank of earth, which might be improved into a fairly efficient temporary rampart; but the interior is commanded from the south and west at short range. The more exposed villages on the border are enclosed only by a ditch and high impenetrable hedge, a good enough protection against Turkoman horsemen.*

Shahrood Bostam District. The Shahrood Bostam District is scarcely a border district, as it at no point touches even the plain of Gurgan, but it is accounted so by the Persians from its liability to Turkoman incursions, and also because the petty Chief of Nardin, who guards a most important section of the border, is subordinate to the Governor of Shahrood.

Though of little account as regards population, wealth, and productions, the district derives some importance from its position. The main trade routes between the eastern Caspian ports and the principal towns of Khorassan, Irak, and the south of Persia lie through it, and it is probably the first point in the highlands that an enemy holding the plain below would attempt to secure.

Extent. From Tash, north-west of Shahrood, to the border of Tursheez, a line drawn across the district would measure 170 miles, and it extends from the watershed of Khushyielak (a great mass of the main range of Alburz) far into the "Kavir" for a distance of not less than 70 miles. Towards Damghan the southern boundary line is deflected northwards, and towards Tursheez south. The area of the district is, therefore, roughly 10,000 square miles.

Plain of Bostam and Magas-Gilan. Along the foot of the main range from the skirts of the mountains of Shahkoh Sawar and "Khushyielak" extends a nearly level plain, draining partly east and partly west, with a width of from 14 to 20 miles, terminating to the west in the valleys of the Shahkoh ridge, and to the east merging into the open plain of Jouven and Isferayeen, and thence into the plain of Nishapur. It is known as the Julga (plain)-i-Bostam at its western end, as the Julga-i-Magas-Gilan in its centre, and the Julga-i-Jah Jerm to the east, where it touches the "Kalshor," or salt stream, and Jouven.

The plain of Bostam and the valley of Shahrood lying four miles to the east of the former town are well watered, have a fine alluvial soil and many large villages, and are capable of extensive cultivation.

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* A list of the principal men of the Asterabad District which may be useful for reference is appended.

The plain of Magas-Gilan is dry and arid, with little water, and the plain of Jah Jerm has a sandy soil, much impregnated with salt. Neither of the latter is capable, under the most favourable circumstances, of supporting any but the scantiest population.

Hilly tract of the south.

South of this tract are successive ridges running at a greater or less interval, about south-east, into the Kavir. Many of these appear to consist wholly or in great part of trap rocks, and the valleys and hollows, where watered, are very fertile. There are some fine villages concealed, as I found, in the low rocky parched ridges that stretch in endless and monotonous succession southwards from the high road to Mashad.

Into the south-east of the district the desert or "Kavir" sends up a broad arm bounded in the far distance only by some low hills on the confines of the district of Tursheez. The station of Abbas-abad on the high road lies on the edge of this belt of desert.

The most prominent mountains of the district encircle the head of the Bostam plain. They are Shahkoh to the north-west, Sawar to the north, Sar-i-Sargha Meghan north-north-east, and Siakoh north-east. The Koh-i-Mayamay, a lofty isolated peak rising to 6,000 or 7,000 feet, lies to the south of that village.

Mountain Passes.

The principal passes giving access from Shahrood to the Caspian are the Shumsherbur Pass, by which Sari and the port of Gez and Asterabad may be reached. The Koozlook Pass leading to Astrabad, and the Kelat Kheech Pass leading into the Nowdeh valley and Gurgan, and on to the Nardin plateau. All these are mentioned in detail in the Appendix on the routes.

Routes.

From Shahrood is a good road through the mountains to Teheran north of the high road. Eastwards there is a direct road to Jah Jarm, Jouvên, and Nishapoor; both these are mentioned in the Appendix. South-east there is a route leading to Tursheez and thence to Herat, formerly more travelled than at present; and south there is a caravan route to Yezd and Isfahan, or Kirman.

Position of the town of Shahrood.

Shahrood is now a mere village, and could never have been much more. Its position is at present somewhat important, as it stands at the head of the best passes into Mazanderan and Astrabad, now open. Improvement in communications in other parts will necessarily deprive it of this advantage.

The new road from the capital to Amol, now under construction, if carried on to Asterabad, will divert the Caspian trade with the west, and the trade of the east will follow the Gurgan route, when opened as it must be sooner or later. Shahrood will then remain merely the *entrepôt* for the trade of the surrounding thinly peopled and sterile country. Its trade with the far south must under modern conditions of progress in manufacture and communications be also short-lived.

As a military position it has more importance; for an army holding it from the sea would sever Khorassan from Persia, the country to the south being desert and waterless to a great extent. The routes connecting it with the Caspian are, however, very impracticable.

In the early days of the Kajar dynasty, when Koords and Turkomans made common cause, Shahrood was a frontier town and the centre of a system of border defence which had its front to the east and connected with Asterabad on its left flank. With the change of times the importance thus derived has departed and can never return, though its governors still cling to some extra emoluments and dignity as principal "wardens of the marches."

The appended statement gives the names of the divisions or belooks of Shahrood-Bostam with some details of each. Divisions.

The country as shown is for the most part sterile and incapable of supporting a large population, though there is room for improvement and progress, and there must in former days have been a far larger population than there now is. As at Nishapoor, it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that the ruin of agriculture in these tracts had followed on the fall of Arab dominion, and the consequent loss of the peculiar energy and genius in agriculture that has always been shown by that race most conspicuously under the most adverse circumstances. [The annexed list of 79 villages includes all but the smallest hamlets.] In computing the numbers of the population I have depended on my observations in the Zerestag, Kohpaya, and Feromad belooks, which contain the largest villages. The figures given may therefore be a trifle over the mark. As the district suffered severely from the famine, an allowance of four souls only has been made to each house. In Shahrood and Bostam the number is somewhat more; in the villages often less. Population, see Appendix (?). N.B.—List omitted.

The villagers are of mixed race, chiefly Ajam or Persian, with a large mixture of Arabs, and a small proportion of Turks of various tribes. The Arabs are descendants of tribes brought up to the north during the early Khalifates. The three races have fused so completely that they are undistinguishable in feature and language. Their diverse origin is known only by tradition. They are hardy and warlike, and the regiment furnished by the district known as the Lashkar-i-Arab-o-Ajam was much renowned for valour. With proper support and leading they would have been, as they say themselves, more than a match for the Turkomans who have ravaged the country for so long a period. Their condition is, in spite of losses from famine, fairly prosperous, and they seemed invariably well-clothed and nourished. With good seasons and a continuance of the present immunity from Turkoman ravages, they must continue to progress in substance and in numbers, for the increasing trade with the Caspian brings the produce of their lands daily into greater demand. Races. Condition.

In the production of grain Shahrood-Bostam is inferior to any district of Khorassan save Subzwar. Gardens and vineyards cover a larger area, and more cotton and silk are raised than elsewhere, but the production of food grains is very scanty. Resources.

In the northern portions of the district the demand for staples of export prevents the production of surplus grain, and in the southern belooks the water supply is deficient, and the soil is often impregnated with salt, and unsuited to grain crops. In the

eastern belooks the amount raised was, I found, actually deficient, and the people were forced to import from the villages on the Bostam plain.

Grain is usually sown on irrigated land, and the yield is said to average ten fold. The mountain villages have unirrigated sowings, said to be productive, when the winter snow does not lie too long.

Forces of the district.

There is no regular garrison in Shahrood, nor in any other part of the district. The nominal quota of men furnished by the villages to the Shah's army is 4,000, but I understood that considerably less than this is exacted.

The "Arab-o-Ajam" regiment remains as a local militia, distributed over the district detachments, aggregating about 1,000 men.

Cavalry.

A body of 200 horse is also maintained for the defence of the border. The men belong for the most part to the district, and are provided with horses and arms, and paid 50 tomans = rupees 200 per annum. This pay is doled out very irregularly, and the whole body is so badly mounted and equipped as to be the laughing stock of the border. Fortunately it is now seldom that their services are required for anything more serious than escort duty on the high road. As in other parts of Khorassan, the villages of Shahrood-Bostam are defended by weak walls of mud.

Town of Shahrood.

Shahrood is badly situated at the foot of a low rocky ridge, from which every yard of ground within the walls is commanded. The walls, high and thin, are crenelated, and defended by circular flanking towers placed at irregular distances. Including a new suburb to the west they have a circuit of about 2½ miles, and are screened to the west and south by extensive walled gardens. North and north-east is the ridge before mentioned; east, broken ground, ravines, low ridges, and scattered gardens.

There are 700 houses and 300 shops in the town, four caravanserais, and two public baths, an office of the Persian Telegraph from Teheran to Asterabad, and a large post house. The population, numbering about 3,500 to 4,000, are chiefly Tajiks, but there is the usual mixture of foreigners. The town is watered by a small stream that might easily be diverted, and water is said to be unprocurable by digging.

Bostam.

Bostam, the residence of the Governors of the district, is altogether stronger and better situated than Shahrood. It lies on an open plain distant four to five miles from the nearest hills, and its gardens enclose it less completely. It is defended by a double wall, the outer has some strong masonry towers; the inner wall is very thick and solid. There is a space of about 50 paces between the two. The "Ark" has a good wall and ditch, and there are besides several strong masonry buildings and tombs. A few light field guns are kept in the "Ark" for escort duty on the high-road.

The population, chiefly agricultural, numbers 3,000 souls.

NARDIN.—The little chiefship of Nardin partially closes a great gap in the border line between Shahrood and the frontier villages of Bujnoord, and for this reason it is worthy of notice, though in

every other respect unimportant. The boundaries of the chiefship, and the limits of the chief's authority, are alike undefined. Nardin itself is a small mud fort with about 300 houses in and about it, and a few poor gardens. The walls of the fort are high and solid, and form a square of about 200 yards a side. It is situated nearly in the centre of a small oval plateau or basin, which must formerly have been the bed of a lake. The length of the basin is about seven miles and its width three miles. Low hills enclose it on all sides. It lies on the south-eastern and barren face of Alburz, but its flood drainage reaches the Gurgan plain. The soil is alluvial and fertile, but needs irrigation. It grows spontaneously only a coarse herbage. A depression in the enclosing hills on the north-east leads into the Kalposh plain, and thence to the pass of Gurgan, distant about 30 miles.

South-east an easy pass descends into the Murtaza Ali Maidan plateau, whence is a good road to Jah Jarm, 18 miles by road, and to Mayamay about 45 miles, and to Bostam about 60 miles. South-west a depression opens a difficult pass, practicable however for both mules and horsemen, to Magas Gilan, distant about 35 miles.

North-west an easy pass leads into the Nowdeh valley, and thence to Asterabad, distant about 100 miles by road. Most of these routes are described in some detail in the Appendix on routes.

Outside of the Nardin basin the limits of the chiefship are, as above noted, undefined. There are two villages in the Nowdeh valley and one in Kalposh, with an aggregate of 150 inhabited houses. These with the 300 houses of Nardin itself give a population of about 2,250. There are in addition to this 250 families, living in Asterabad and Mazanderan, still reckoned among the population. They were driven out by the famine, but are returning as opportunity offers.

Recent re-occupation of Nardin.

There are no traces about Nardin of ancient occupation, and it was probably never more than a summer camping ground of nomads from Jah Jarm and Bostam. The fort and villages mentioned were entirely destroyed about 100 years ago by the Turkomans, and remained deserted till about 1840, when Ali Kooli Khan and his son, of a Turk family of Jah Jarm, obtained a grant of the lands, and rebuilt the fort and villages, collecting a band of horse, Koords and Turks, of various tribes and very evil reputation. In consideration of his services in guarding the border, he held all the country he could cultivate and occupy free of revenue.

Present chief; duties and tenure of chiefship.

The present chief, Afrasiyab Khan, is a young man, active, energetic and popular with his people, and his body of 200 horse are accounted as good as any on the border.

In consequence of his father's questionable practices he has been taken more in hand, and subordinated to the Governor of Bostam. In place of his former independent tenure he has a fixed money grant of 700 tomans and the single village of Toolbin in "jaghire." Also a grant of 20 tomans assigned on the other villages for each of

the 200 horsemen. The villages are unable to meet this impost, and the loss falls on the chief, according to his own account.

The primary duty of the chief is to guard the passes lying between the Kalposh plain and Jah Jerm, and to perform this effectually he has to throw out a chain of posts nearly to the Gurgan Pass. A line drawn from that pass to Jah Jerm would define tolerably the limits of country in his charge. Small posts of horsemen watch 10 or 12 different routes by which "Allamans" may enter the Jah Jarm or Bostam plain. These are supported by a detachment at Nanik in Kalposh, while the main body remains at Nardin.

The comparatively populous Nowdeh valley is also dependent, to some extent, on the chief for protection, for though no posts are maintained there, he is expected to retaliate on the Yemoots, if any incursion more serious than usual is made by them.

His position and prospects.

The situation of Nardin is somewhat important at present, but as the liability of the country in its rear to Turkoman ravages decreases, so will its importance, and the claims of the chief to special consideration.

A severe blow to his independence was struck, when his horsemen were lately ordered for inspection to Teheran; and he himself anticipated the appropriation of his money grant by the Governor of Bostam, to whom he has given offence. His other neighbour, the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord, is also his enemy, for both he and his father have refused the feudal allegiance that that chief deems his right from the fact of the family having immigrated from Jah Jerm, which is in his government.

With the people of Kohsar, the Nowdeh valley, and the Yemoots, the chief was, I found, most popular, and his relations with the latter especially were exceedingly close and friendly. When the unexpected muster of his little force was ordered, he was able by their aid to make up at once the number of horsemen required.

From five to ten years is the utmost term that Afrasiyab Khan can hope to retain his present position and privileges as a warden of the border.

The country, however, will gain much by increased security, and the chief, if fortunate, will be repaid for loss of political importance by a great increase of wealth and substance.

Nardin itself is capable of a large extension of cultivation, and the Kalposh plateau is one of the most fertile tracts in Persia. The chief calculated that it was capable of supporting with certainty 50,000 people; for the crops would be, for the most part, independent of irrigation and not much affected by deficiency in rainfall.* If he should succeed in retaining his position as hereditary chief of Nardin and Kalposh, and in bringing under cultivation, as he has begun to do, all the waste lands at present under his control, he must eventually become one of the wealthiest chieftains in Khorassan.

* Owing to the elevation of the plateau and the moisture of the climate.

Belooks of Asterabad.

Number and name of Belook.	General Description.
1. Anazan - -	Lies to the west of the district, extending from sea to the confines of the Sáwár Belook in the mountains, 20 to 25 miles to the south. The port of Gez is in this belook. The principal village is Nowkhandan, of 400 houses, 20 miles distant from Astrabad. The Khan is Governor of the belook, and warden of a portion of the border at the Kara-Soo. He has a paid irregular force of 50 horse and 200 foot. The present Khan is a young man of 25 years of age. There are ten villages in the belook, the principal Gez (300), Nowkhandan (400), Seewan (300), Hashtikkah (200). It is covered with forest to a greater extent than any portion of the district or of Mazanderan. The village lands are fertile and produce good crops of cotton and rice.
2. Sadam Rustak -	Lies to the north of the town, reaching from the sea to the foot of the mountains. A forest-covered swampy tract with 40 villages, and a good deal of cultivation of cotton, rice, and grain.
3. Shahkoh-o-Sawar -	Includes the whole tract of mountains north of Asterabad as far as Shahrood-o-Bostam. The principal villages are Shahkoh, Bala, and Paeen (100), lying on that mountain, at a height of 7,500 feet, and Tash (50). It has now only seven inhabited villages with 280 houses in all, but formerly there were 30, and its green valleys bear ample evidence of former cultivation.
4. Asterabad-i-Rustak	Lies to the north and east of the town, extending to Sang-i-Deveen and has 22 villages. There is some open ground and pasture land towards the Kara-Soo, but the greater portion is under forest. Nowdeh, one of the principal villages, 13 miles east from the town, has 200 houses. The surface of the country is slightly higher, and far less swampy than the belooks to the west.
5. Katool -	Lies to the south of the last, extending from the mountains to the open plain held by the Turkomans. There are some fine villages standing in extensive clearings in the forest. It has in all 26 villages and hamlets, of which the principal are Katool (400), Maintaloo (150), Darkilla (200). The country is covered with forest for the most part, but has some open grass-covered plains and extensive reed beds. The Kara-Soo rises in the mountains to the south of the belook and flows west to Katool. A post of 50 horse for border defence is fixed at that village. Cotton is largely grown, and rice where there are facilities for irrigation.
6. Finderisk - -	Lies south of the last; and includes the whole belt or forest as far as the Nowdeh stream, and the lower slopes of Khushyielak. It is traversed by several large streams, the Nowdeh stream, the Ramayan stream, and the Oodarooah Rood, feeders of the Gurgan. There are 51 villages and hamlets, the principal of which are Finderisk (1,000 with hamlets), Ramayan (200) Nowdeh (50). As in the Katool belook, there is much heavy forest, but also large and extensive meadows and cane patches.
7. Kohsar - -	A fine plateau 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the plain lying north-east of the last. It has 12 fine villages, the principal of which, Pursyan, Farang, and Dezain, have each about 1,000 houses. It is, together with Finderesk and Katool, under the Sirteep Mirza Ali Nakee, who is also Colonel of the Astrabad regiment. In the precipitous glens, draining the plateau north of the Gurgan, dwell the Hajilar, a remnant of a Turk tribe now counting 1,000 houses and owning but a nominal allegiance to Persia.

Revenue.—Tomans 8,281: Kharwars of rice 8,499. The revenue of all but a few khalsa or Crown villages has been remitted. No revenue from fisheries.

Population.—A rough estimate of the population of the district gives—

Rural population	74,000
Town	6,000
Total	80,000

There are, I was informed on good authority, in all 143 villages in the district, to which an average of 100 houses may be given. In some belooks, as in Kohsar, Finderesk, and Katool, the villages are large, the people being forced for protection from the Turkomans to crowd together in one settlement. In the western belooks, where there is greater security, more especially in those tracts west of Asterabad, the population is spread out in small villages and hamlets. The average number of houses in the villages I passed through was 193, but these were of course the largest. After comparison of the inquiries made in each belook—and I passed through the whole of them—I am satisfied that the average given for the whole is as near the truth as possible.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL MEN, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND OTHERS, IN ASTERABAD.

Name.	Rank.	Remarks.
Soleman Khan	Sahib Ikhtiyar	Governor.
Hassan Khan	Naib-ul-Hukumat.	Son of Soleman Khan.
Mirza Bahram	Wazeer.	
Alam Shah	Mirza.	
Mirza Ali Naki	Sirteep	Governor of Finderesk.
Lutf Ali Khan	Kalantar	Headman of Katool.
Abbas Khan	„	„ „ „
Ali Akbar Sultan	„	„ „ Astrabad Rustak.
Mahomed Sadik Khan	„	„ „ Sadam Rustak.
Rahim Khan	„	„ „ Anazan.
Abdul Samad Khan	Sarkarda	Chief of Maksoodloo, resides at Sirkhan Kalatah, two farsakhs from Asterabad.
Hajee Yusuf	Kalantar	Headman of the town of Asterabad.
Abbas Mirza	Sultan	Artillery Officer, a descendant of Nadir Shah.
Bahram	Darogha	Police officer.
Mirza Karim Khan	Sirteep	Commandant of Ferozkohi Regiment.
Mahomed Ibrahim Khan.	„	„ „ Hazar Jareeb Regiment.
Lutf Ali Khan	Sarhang	„ „ the garrison (350 Hazar Jaribae) stationed at Ak-Kala.
Hajee Syud Sadik	Mujtahid	Chief Priest.
Aka Shaikh Salih	Mulla.	
Aka Mahomed	„	
Mahomed Ismail	„	
Hajee Syud Tahir	„	
Gool Mahomed	„	
Abdul Razzak	„	
Abbas Ali	„	
Hajee Mohsin	„	
Mahomed Ali Monabadi.	„	

APPENDIX.

Belooks of Shahrood-o-Bostam.

Number and Name of Belook.	General Description.
1. Zeristak - -	In the extreme west. The tract has a rough hilly surface with a few fertile strips of plain fairly watered by "Kanats." The best of these is the Shahrood Plain, on which stands Shahrood, and 10 to 12 fine villages watered by the Rood-i-Shah, a small brook which rises in Shahkoh and exhausts itself in irrigation canals in the plain. The principal villages are Shahrood, Bostam, Deh Mulla, Jafirabad, Yunisabad, and Bedasht. A good deal of silk and cotton is raised, as well as sufficient corn. Cultivation, being dependent on Kanats, suffers severely from drought. The villages have fine large gardens, producing abundance of fruit, a good deal of which is dried for export. The inhabitants are about half Arab and half Ajam, or Persian.
2. Kohpaya - -	The northern portion of the district, including the skirts of the main range. The largest and most flourishing villages watered by small perennial stream, flowing from Sawar and Khushyielak mountains, are situated in this belook. The soil is stony but very fertile. The principal villages are Abersich (100), in a glen of Shahkoh, a very fine village; Abre (300), the frontier village in the direction of the Yamoot Turkomans, lying high up on the north face of Khushyielak. It is distant 15 miles from Bostam, and 24 miles from Asterabad. The people from their connection with the Turkomans speak Turki, as well as Persian. Mojund (150), the inhabitants are Arab and Ajam in about equal proportions.
3. Sarhad - -	The eastern portion of the district. It is still considered the actual frontier and is held by a subordinate Governor, who administers justice and collects the revenue. His authority extends up to the southern belooks, Biarjomund, and Khar Tooroonay, the tract most subject to Turkoman incursions. The tract is, for the most part, arid and desert plain, divided by low ridges, running from the west and bending south-east towards the desert. The principal villages are Kelat and Khich of 200 houses, lying on the eastern shoulder of Khushyielak, Magas Gilan, 200 houses, on the road to Jah Jerm. Robat consisting of two villages, Serai and Sepanj, of 30 houses, also on the Jah Jerm road, and Kelatha, near the high road.
4. Biarjomund	A very extensive tract of low rugged hills, ravine-cut plain, and arid and salt desert, occupying the whole southern portion of the district. The principal villages are Biar and Jomund of 200 houses each, 50 miles south-east from Shahrood; Khana Khoday (200), all on the road from Shahrood to Tursheez. There are in all nine villages; the inhabitants are of mixed Arab and Ajam race. Torood-o-Belook is a sub-division of Biarjomund, lying to the east of it.
5. Khar Tooran or Tooran.	To the east of Biarjomund, a desert tract with seven or eight hamlets watered by springs from the low ridges on the edge of the desert. The Tursheez road passes through the villages of Khar and Tooran. Beyond the belook to the east lies only a single large village, Dooroonay, about 20 miles from the town of Tursheez. Its inhabitants are said to be of pure Persian descent.

Number and Name of Belook.	General Description.
6. Feroomad - -	A small hilly tract lying across the Kal-Shor on the borders of Jouven and Subzwar. The villages of Feroomad and Firoozabad, and a few small hamlets, compose the belook. Feroomad was formerly a large and important village. The plateau on which it stands is wide and has a fine trap soil, but the supply of water is scanty, and has been decreasing for many years.

Revenue.—The nominal land revenue assessment of the district amounts to 16,000 tomans in cash and grain.

Population.—Rural - - - - 25,000
Towns of Shahrood and Bostam - 7,000
Total - 32,000

Section II.

Chiefship of Bujnoord.
„ Koochan.
„ Deregez.
„ Kelat-i-Nadiri.

Appendices.

Estimate of population, &c., of border.

Bujnoord.—The Eelkhanee or chief of Bujnoord divides with the rival chief of Koochan the command of the Koord tribes settled on the north-east frontier of Persia, and has on the whole a more important position, though his lands are inferior and his tribe fewer in number and less wealthy than that of his rival.

The Bujnoord tribe of Koords is known as the Shahdilloo, the Koochan tribe as the Zaferanloo.

Origin of the Koord settlements.

In the reign of Shah Abbass Safavi, or about the year 1600, the Koord tribes of the west of Persia had attained to great power, and by their endless dissensions and violent feuds threatened constantly the peace of the empire. The annals (unpublished) of the tribe relate that Shad Abbass took counsel with his ministers as to the best mode of curbing his powerful and unruly feudatories.

It was urged by his Vizier that it was impossible to control them properly while they remained in the same tract of country and able to unite in resisting the Imperial power, and he suggested that a portion of them should be removed to the Khorassan border, where they would be completely separated from their kinsmen, and would find among the Turkomans ample scope for the indulgence of their warlike instincts.

The Shah approved the plan, the only objection to which was its apparent impracticability, and laid on the shoulders of the Vizier the difficult task of carrying it into execution. Judging well the temper of the people he had to deal with, the Vizier determined to send to the principal Koord chiefs a number of presents from the Shah of very unequal value, in the expectation that such violent disputes would ensue on any attempt at distribution as would prevent a combination for at least a sufficiently long time to enable him to seize the important passes into the Koord country. His plan succeeded admirably, the chiefs were shortly in arms against each other; they made a last appeal to the Shah, who sent them orders to settle the matter among themselves, which they proceeded to do in true Koord fashion. When the disturbance was at its height, the Royal troops entered the country, and, siding with the stronger factions, drove the opposing party into its forts, and capturing these in succession, marched the whole of their garrisons, to the number of 100,000 families or about half million of souls, off into the far east.

The expatriated tribes were the Shahdilloo, the Zaferanloo, the Kywanloo, and the Amanloo.

They found their new country overrun by the Turkomans, who had acquired a complete superiority over the Gerayli Turks and Persians inhabiting it, and had driven them out of the "Atak" and the fertile valleys of the north side of the chain down to Mashad, Nishapoor, and Bostam.

Entering the "Atak" from Deregez, the Koords drove the Turkomans off to the Tejen and Serruks, and extending west occupied Ishkabad, Annau, and the famous pastures of Nissa. Under their protection the towns of Mihna, Abivert, and Chahcha were rebuilt and re-peopled, and the Turkomans found everywhere an impenetrable barrier of Koord horsemen as active and as daring as themselves.

After the death of Shah Abbass the Koord settlements participated in the general disorganization of the country, and the tribes were after a few years forced to leave the Atak and recross the mountains. They settled at Koochan, where there is still shown the ruins of an old fort said to have been the first constructed by them. The ruin is known as Koord Kila.

The Zaferanloo, the most powerful tribe, occupied Chinaran, a fertile tract with fine pastures, at the head of the Kashaf Rood the stream draining the plain of Mashad, and Koochan, in the plain at the head of the Attrek. The Kywanloo occupied lands between Chinaran and Koochan, and held all the mountains as far as Deregez. The Amanloo settled south between Koochan and Nishapoor. The tribe of Shahdilloo, against whom the others had combined, was forced to move to the west into the hilly country draining west into the Gurgan and north-west into the Attrek.

Even at that time the villages of the Gerayli Turks on the northern feeders of the Attrek had been destroyed, and the Shah-

dilloo appear never to have been in force sufficient to re-occupy them.

Present condition.

Up to the present time the tribes have maintained possession of the lands they then occupied, but with varying fortunes.

The Zaferanloo of Chinaran have lost all separate political existence, and their chiefs all influence. Famine, reckless rebellion, and misgovernment have reduced their numbers and ruined their fortunes. Such of the clans as remain look to the chief of Koochan as their leader. The Zaferanloo of Koochan, more favoured by fortune, and possessing a more fertile country, have increased in influence, numbers, and wealth, and take the full lead of all the other tribes. The Kywanloo, few in numbers, are prosperous, but have no separate importance. Their country, Radkan, is an appanage of the Government of Mashad, and their hereditary chief a subordinate official of the administration. The Amanloo, to whose lot fell the poorest lands, the valleys of Marousk and Amirabad, have fared worst of all. They are now reduced to from 2,500 to 3,000 families, chiefly nomads, enjoying a most unenviable reputation. The Shahdilloo, with a rough country, much exposed to the north and west to hostile attacks, have lost in numbers, and have failed to attain to the affluence of their cousins of Koochan; but bearing, as they do, the brunt of the Tekke and Yamoot incursions, their position has been, and is still to some extent, more important, and their special privileges and partial independence will probably be maintained longer than with the other tribes. All are, however, threatened with the loss of the influence they acquired, and have maintained hitherto as guardians of the border. The submission of the Turkomans to either of the powers now threatening them will reduce the Koords at once to the position of the tribes of the interior districts, the Karai, the Beiyat, and others.

Tracts included.

The chiefship of Bujnoord includes Bujnoord, Simalghan, and Mana on the Attrek, and Jah Jerm, Isferayeen, and the valleys of Buguivi, Bam, Sefiabad, and Jouven, have only of late years been severed from the chiefship, and the former may still be regarded as belonging to it, for it will probably revert on the first change of government in Khorassan. The boundaries of the chiefship are somewhat undefined, but a rough estimate of its extent may be made.

Boundaries.

On the west a line drawn from the "Atak" west of Kushkhana, or from a point north-north-west of the town of Bujnoord, southward, passing 14 miles east of that town, and across the southern chain of Alburz to the Isferayeen plain, and thence deflected eastwards for 10 or 12 miles to include Isferayeen, will give the boundary approximately. Thence a line drawn west-south-west, passing about 15 miles south of Jah Jerm to a point within about 10 miles of Riabat, will give its southern limits. Bending northwards and slightly east, a line drawn from that point across the mountains to Chalbash on the Attrek watershed, will give the eastern boundary. The northern boundary is quite undefined.

The Attrek marks the limit of the inhabited country, but the Eelkhanee considers all beyond, as far as the heights overlooking the Turkoman "obahs," as in his possession, and neither Koord nor Turkoman would attempt to settle there without his assent.

Extent. The tract of country thus defined measures, therefore, from east to west about 90 miles, and the average breadth from north to south of the inhabited portion is about 50 miles, giving an area of about 4,500 square miles.

Bujnoord. The plateau or basin in which stands the town of Bujnoord is situated about the centre of the chiefship, and is enclosed by a knot of the principal mountains of the central section of the Eastern Alburz. It has an area of 80 square miles, is level in the centre, and rises on all sides in ravine cleft slopes and rocky glens, to the summits of irregular, but everywhere high and difficult ridges.

To the north, seven or eight miles of impracticable ground intervene between the plateau and the Germekhans, tributary of the Attrek; north-east is a high peak known as the Akhir Koh, or "last mountain"—so called, because westwards and northwards as far as the outer Atak ridge and Kara-Kalla there is nothing visible but a wide expanse of comparatively low broken country, formed of ridges and plateaux cut up by innumerable ravines. From the base of this peak north-west the fertile valley of Mana descends to the Attrek. Westward, across the mountain barrier lies the wide plateau of Simalghan, broken by many deep ravines, reaching to the Attrek from the base of the "Korkhood" peak. South and south-west rise the lofty mountains, Aladagh, Koh Salig, and Takht Mirza, beyond which is the plain of Isferayeen and Jouven. West of Aladagh is the prominent Korkhood peak, and along the base of both mountains stretches the plateau or plain of Shoughan, draining south, and extending to Chander and the Gurgan.

Mana and Simalghan. Mountains to the south

The plateau of Bujnoord has a height of 3,200 feet. Mana, Simalghan, and Shoughan are lower, but all have an equally fertile soil and ample water.

The mountains, for the most part of limestone and trap, afford good pasturage, and often wide tracts of arable land, bearing good crops of wheat and barley. They are well wooded on their northern slopes with juniper. To the west a thin forest of deciduous trees extends up the valleys.

The plain of Isferayeen and Jah Jarm is parched and arid in the extreme, and could under no circumstances support a large population. The soil is, however, alluvial and fertile, and well repays irrigation where practicable.

Routes. The plateau of Bujnoord itself is so enclosed by mountains and so situated, that no important road, either commercial or military, will ever pass through it. The valley of the Attrek and of its tributary, the Germekhans, are absolutely impracticable as a highway through the chain of Alburz, and the routes north to the Atak, described in a previous report, are such as would be avoided by traders or by modern armies.

A route that may at some future time have importance, passes

from Bostam through Jah Jarm and Isferayeen, in the south of the chiefship, to Mashad and the old trade route to Gurgan, also before described, traverses the plain of Isferayeen and the plateau of Shoughan.

Population. The mass of the population of Bujnoord are, as above noted, Koords of the Shahdilloo tribe, who inhabit chiefly Bujnoord itself and the frontier villages of Simalghan and Mana. The town of Bujnoord has 1,200 houses chiefly of Shahdilloo, but there are also a few families of Zaferanloo, political refugees, and of Tajiks and Turks driven by the famine from other districts. On the plateau and in the hill skirts are also 13 villages, almost entirely of Shahdilloo Koords, with a population of 1,200 households.

The valley of Mana has 10 villages and hamlets, with 300 households of Shahdilloo, and a few families of Turks.

The Simalghan plateau has 12 villages, with an aggregate of 400 houses of Shahdilloo and Geraili Turks.

Up to a comparatively recent date there were also in this portion of the chiefship a number of nomads of the Goklan tribe, but the acquisition of Kara-Kalla in such close proximity by the Akhal Tekkah, forced them to descend to the Gurgan plain, where they still remain in political connection with the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord, who collects their revenue on the part of the Government of Astrabad.

The Shoughan plain with the hill skirts about it has five villages and a number of hamlets or "Kallas" with about 400 houses. Jah Jarm, which must formerly have been a place of some importance, is now in the last stage of decay. A miserable village of 400 houses only remains amid the ruins of what must have been at least a considerable town under Arab rule. There are also three small hamlets, Iwar, Durra, and Gurma, making a total of about 800 houses. The people are entirely "Ajam" or Persian, which is strange, as the name of the town, and all the ruins visible are certainly Arab, and there is in the neighbouring district of Bostam a large mixture of Arab blood.

In Isferayeen there are two principal villages, Sangkhas or Chardeh (300 houses), consisting of the hamlets, Jafarabad (40), Khuda Shah (40), Jurbat (70), and Sangkhas (150), and Mianabad (100), in all 400 families, chiefly of Persian origin.

There are besides eight or ten hamlets with 100 to 150 houses, and there are settled in Mianabad about 1,000 families of the Hazara tribe brought from Herat in 1857. The total population of the chiefship, therefore, roughly estimated, stands thus:—

Town	7,200
Bujnoord	6,000
Mana	1,500
Simalghan	2,000
Shoughan	1,600
Isferayeen	7,000
Jah Jerm	3,200
Total	28,500

About two-thirds of the whole are Koords. The disastrous famine of 1872 and several previous years that ruined the agriculture and dispersed the population of other parts of Khorassan, brought wealth and prosperity to the Koords of Koochan and Bujnoord. Their grain crops, lying for the most part at a considerable elevation, and sheltered from the burning wind of the southern deserts, are independent of irrigation. Though lighter by reason of the want of seasonable rainfall, they were still sufficient to feed the people and many thousands of immigrants, and to leave a large balance for exportation. The Eelkhanee of Bujnoord cited as an evidence of the improved condition of his people, that the number of women in the town had been doubled by importations during the famine. Young girls from the distressed districts were sold by their parents to the Koords for a few loads of grain. The peasants also of the outlying villages have laid by money and increased their stock of household goods. There was certainly every appearance of prosperity, the villages teemed with infant life, and all classes were well clothed, fed, and housed. The tracts lying south of the mountain chain, Isferayeen and Jah Jerm, had suffered somewhat, but there had been few deaths—the destitute having found food and shelter among the Koords. Condition of the population.

The grain-producing lands of Bujnoord lie at a greater distance from the markets of Mashad, Nishapoor, and Subzwar, than those of Koochan, and as a consequence cultivation is more nearly limited to local wants. The outlying tracts, Mana and Simalghan, do not export at all, and Jah Jerm and Isferayeen do not produce sufficient for their own requirements. Resources for supply of grain.

The villages lying around Bujnoord produce at a rough guess 5,000 kharwars in excess of their wants, which is exported to Isferayeen, Jah Jerm, and Subzwar. The quantity exported is said to be slightly on the increase. Prices at the time of my visit, shortly after harvest, stood at 7 maunds per kran for wheat, for barley 11 maunds per kran. Grain is at present the only article of export, the little silk, cotton, and rice raised being kept for home consumption. With improved communications and an increased demand, the facility afforded by the unirrigated lands on the hill slopes for grain production would admit of the ample supply of water enjoyed by most of the villages being employed in the production of the more valuable trade staples. The opening of the Gurgan route and increased security would prove of especial benefit to Bujnoord, as tending to bring the Caspian markets within reach of its produce, and to encourage the increase of population and extension of cultivation of its fertile waste lands.

The force at the command of the Eelkhanee of the Shahdilloo consists, in the first place, of a body varying from 800 to 1,000 horse. At the time of my visit the border had been for some time comparatively tranquil, and the number maintained was as low as 800. Of these I saw about 100 men very well mounted and armed with swords and short handy percussion and flint Force of Bujnoord cavalry.

rifles of native manufacture. Some few of the chief's own retainers have good English and Russian "double barrels." The sample I saw was said to be, and no doubt was, a fair one, for it was simply the detachment in support of the border posts under the chief's order. The remainder were scattered over different parts, chiefly in Mana and Simalghan. Of these minor detachments I saw also a few, and they were in every way as efficient as their comrades at Bujnoord. The whole 800 men, if armed better and slightly disciplined, would form an admirable body of light cavalry, ready and able to ride over any ground, having the most perfect command of their horses and great endurance. Their horses are strangely enough all obtained from the Turkomans. There were, I found, not more than two or three dozen mares in the chiefship. Pasturage is insufficient for large numbers, and the stock is entirely in the hands of the Turkomans, whom nothing will induce to part with a good mare or stallion. All the remounts required by the Shahdilloo are procured from the Akhal "obahs" by purchase or barter of prisoners, and many a raid on the "obahs" is made simply with the object of taking a few prisoners, who may be exchanged for horses. The Turkomans thus mount the only enemies in the whole of Persia, whom they have any reason to dread, for these remarks apply to all the Koords of this border.

When questioned on the subject they replied that, though the tribe was thoroughly united in all things seriously affecting the common welfare, in such small matters the Aksakals had no power to interfere with individuals. If a man chose to sell his horse or to ransom a relative, there was no one to prevent his so doing. The result is that the Shahdilloo are better mounted on the average than their enemies, and for such a country as well mounted perhaps as any body of cavalry in the world. This force of 800 men is stationed in detachments on the Attrek, at Mana and Simalghan, at Soughan, and at Bujnoord. They are mostly natives of the district, and for the most part stationed in their own villages, forming thus a species of mounted militia or yeomanry. Besides rent-free lands they have a small assignment of grain in lieu of pay, and a share in the profits arising from each successful expedition in which they may be engaged. Their horses and arms are supplied for the most part by their chiefs.

Footmen.

In addition to this body of cavalry there is a force of 300 militia footmen at the Eelkhanee's disposal, who are regularly enrolled and paid by grain assignments. They are armed either with the "Shamkhal," or the "Khirli," before described. Their chief duty is to guard the roads across the Attrek valley that are open to the Turkomans; but they are not pushed forward beyond Simalghan, or its last village, Kallakhan.

The Shahdilloo tribe may be reckoned also as able to turn out at the bidding of their chief about 3,000 armed men. The villagers are almost invariably of fine physique, armed with good guns of native make, and accustomed to a life of almost constant warfare. The people of the outlying tracts may in fact be re-

garded as always under arms, for they have regular picket duty on the mountain passes leading into their valleys, and are frequently summoned to aid in repelling attack or to join the Eelkhanee in his raids on the Turkoman "obahs." On these occasions their duty is to stop pursuit by holding the heights on either side of the glen which the mounted body may select for their retreat.

Jah Jerm. Jah Jerm is an intermediate post between Bujnoord and Nardin, and has a body of 100 to 150 horsemen and two light guns under the command of the Eelkhanee's deputy, Mirza Rahim Khan, who has also charge of the town and three villages. The horsemen of Jah Jerm are of various tribes, and equally well armed and equipped with those of Bujnoord.

Positions to be guarded by the Eelkhanee. Jah Jerm border. The duties required of the Eelkhanee with his force of 1,000 horse and 300 foot are in the first place to cover the districts in his rear, Bostam, Subzwar, and Jouven, and for this purpose it is necessary for him to watch and close on the first alarm all the passes from the right flank of Nardin, *i.e.*, from the Murtaza Ali Maidan to the Derband-i-Hissar or Chardeh, a line of about 40 to 50 miles in length..

Weak point of the line. There are in this distance four passes practicable for a large number of horsemen, and many paths over which a few men may scramble with difficulty and by stealth only. The whole line from the flank of the Nardin line of posts to the Chukah* Mountain is left to the men of Jah Jerm, whose numbers are insufficient to do more than give timely warning of danger.

The three passes, Gudar-i-Kohsar, Tang-i-Kazi, and Dahana-i-Gulbin, can be passed by horsemen for the most part at speed, and are consequently taken by the larger plundering bodies who are able to defy any efforts of the weak detachment usually in the fort of Jah Jerm. This is, therefore, the weakest part of the whole border line.

Shoughan border. The passes to the east, round the flanks of the Koh Buhar, are guarded by a detachment at Shoughan, and for seven or eight years no large body of Turkomans has been able to pass that way.

Bujnoord border. The line of uninhabited country from Shoughan, right round by Simalghan to the Atak, has also to be guarded for the protection of the Bujnoord villages, and this task is naturally most efficiently performed by the Shahdilloo, aided as they are by the impracticable nature of their country.

Offensive duties of Shahdilloo. The Eelkhanee is expected also, by retaliatory raids on the Tekkah "obahs," east of Kooshkhana, that is of the Yang-i-Kalla "obah," to force them to restrict their operations in the direction of Jah Jerm and Nardin, and in the same manner to keep in check the Yamoots on the Gurgan and Attrek. This being a most profitable service is also very efficiently performed, though it has hitherto had little effect in checking incursion into those parts.

* Chukah.

Lastly, the Goklan are under the skirt of the Shahdilloo, who aid them when too hard pressed by their enemies, the Yamoots.

Supports.

In case of very pressing need the Bujnoord force may be reinforced from three different directions. The Eelkhanee has the right to summon the horsemen of Nardin, and any men of the Hazara Contingent who may happen to be at Mianabad.

These last were all formerly under his orders, but have now come under the direct control of the Governor-General of Khorassan. He may also demand assistance from the chief of the Zaferanloo. This, however, is seldom done, and only on occasions requiring the collection of a large force, such as the attacks on Kar-i-Kalla in 1860 and 1869.

In minor operations it would appear that any attempt to bring the rival tribes together is considered at least inadmissible, and thus the immense advantage of union is lost.

Yar Mahomed Khan, Eelkhanee.

The present Eelkhanee of Bujnoord, Yar Mohamed Khan, is a man of from 40 to 45 years of age, of intemperate habits, and little force of character. He is, however, liberal and just with his people, and consequently popular.

The Saham-ud-Dowlah, his uncle, the late Eelkhanee, was a man of so much influence, that he enjoys a better position than his power, resources, and personal ability, could have earned for him. His grandfather, Najaf Ali Khan, died in imprisonment in Teheran. He left nine sons.

1. *Jafir Koli Khan,* who joined the rebellion of the Salar, and was with him at Subzwar, Bostam, and Mashad. He saved himself by timely submission, and afterwards rose to high power, and was Governor of Asterabad till his death, which took place 15 years ago.

2. *Hyder Kooli Khan,* Saham-ud-Dowlah, a man of much note and great influence, who was chief of the tribe for 10 years and also Governor of Astrabad, deceased.

3. *Yazdan Kooli Khan,* father of the present Eelkhanee, deceased.

4. *Mahomed Rahim Khan,* deceased.

5. *Ali Murdan Khan,* deceased.

6. *Subhan Kooli Khan.*

7. *Mahomed Kooli,* Governor of Tursheez.

8. *Sher Mahomed Khan,* residing at Bujnoord.

9. *Sikandar Khan,* deceased.

Tenure of chiefship.

The Eelkhanees of the Shahdilloo hold their lands from the Shah under a species of feudal tenure. They are exempt from payment of revenue on condition of military service. They are bound to protect their own borders, and to guard the passes leading across it into the interior districts.

No revenue is taken from the people, save such as the chief himself may choose to take. The whole of the permanent body of horse and foot for border defence being paid by assignments on the villages, and many villages being made over to the chief's relations and adherents, he is able to collect for his personal expenses only the small sum of 4,000 tomans=rupees 16,000 per

annum. Of this 300 tomans is raised from the town dues on shops, sale of cattle, horses, &c., the balance is collected rateably from the free villages, *i.e.*, those not assigned to dependants.

Four thousand tomans is the nominal sum assessed yearly, but I was given to understand that more than this is occasionally exacted; the excess usually falling on villages not inhabited by the chief's tribesmen. A tribute of horses, and usually of a sum of 1,000 tomans or more, in gold coins, is paid yearly to the Shah. At this cost, and on the conditions above noted, the whole of the lands of Bujnoord are enjoyed by the Shahdilloo. Under a better system, and with increased security, they would be capable of returning a fair revenue to the Shah's Government, and the service for which the tribe is paid, and enjoy such great privileges, would probably be performed at a less cost by troops of the regular army.

In former days the hold of the central Government on Khorassan, and especially the mountain districts, was so weak that it was necessary to submit to the assumption of partial independence of the border chiefs and to humour them in many ways. This is now unnecessary, and much better terms might with justice be made with them.

Relations with the provincial and central Governments.

The relations of the "Eelkhanees" with the provincial Government are of a somewhat anomalous nature, and in fact depend to a great extent on the personal character of the incumbents of the two offices.

The Saham-ud-Dowlah was almost independent of the different Governors-General of his time, and corresponded directly with the Shah and his Ministers, while the present incumbent, Yar Mahomed Khan, has been unable to hold his own in spite of strenuous efforts. The district of Jouven was first taken from him by the Hissam-u-Sultana, and later, but two years ago, Isferayeen was attached by the late Governor-General, the Nizam-u-Dowlah. The Eelkhanee is in fact now a subject of the Khorassan Government, though a reluctant and somewhat stiff-necked one. All attempts to bring him lately to Mashad failed, as the Ministers at Teheran were, it was said, neutralised by bribes. He himself informed me that he should reluctantly obey even the Shah's orders to present himself at Mashad, until, as he hinted, a change of Government gave him some security against fine or other maltreatment. Of the central Government the Eelkhanee is now, perforce, an obedient and submissive subject. The assumption of independence of his ancestors, which had always some reference to the state of affairs in the kingdom in general, was often justified by their position. With a weak government in the province, unsupported by the Shah's Ministers, a fair chance of aid from the Zaferanloo, and from the Turkomans, and a certainty of the devoted support of their own people, they could afford to assume a high tone; but times have now changed. Communication with the capital is more frequent, and the people have learnt, as I was informed, to address their complaints against their chief, in a manner before unknown, to the Ministers there.

The general tendency of progress in the kingdom consequent on a long period of undisturbed peace is also towards a centralisation of authority, and this extends even to the remotest parts.

The old feudal feeling is thus constantly weakened, and though the chief could still no doubt command a party in his tribe, any overt opposition on his part to the supreme authority would be supported by the mass of the tribesmen in a very half-hearted manner. They regard themselves now, in fact, whatever their profession may be, as subjects of the Shah, and not, as in old days, liegemen of their chiefs.

Since the days of the Eelkhanee Jafer Kooli Khan, the Goklan tribe has been under the direct management of Bujnoord, and the influence of the Saham-ud-Dowlah procured him an accession of authority.

The tribute, or revenue, due by the tribe is collected by a deputy of the Eelkhanee, who sits at Sangar, the chief settlement. The cavalry of the tribe are also under his orders, and he has authority to coerce and punish.

Relations with Turkomans.

With the Turkomans of the other tribes on his border, the Yamoot and Tekkah, the relations of the Eelkhanee change almost from day to day, but when at their worst communication is never suspended. An open feud with one section does not preclude others from giving information, or performing other services that may be required. Thus at the time of my visit, though at open war with the sections of the Yamoot nearest to Bujnoord, and only awaiting a favourable opportunity to raid some of their "obahs" on the Upper Attrek, the Eelkhanee received messengers from other sections constantly, and was acquainted with every movement of the tribe, and of the Russian commanders on the Caspian coast.

With the Tekkah he was professedly on terms of friendship. A number of men of the Kizil Arvat and Bam-Boorma "obahs" were in Bujnoord, and intelligence of the attitude of the tribe and their intentions with regard to the threatened incursion of General Lamakin's column reached him daily.

The chief's Turkoman agent, spy, or ally, for either of the three terms would indicate his functions, was one Fowlad Khan of Bami, a man said to have some influence, and to have been implicated in the Tekkah raid on the Russian Yamoot settlements at Balkhan. Through this man the chief is able not only to obtain the best information, but also to influence to some extent the movements and policy of the tribe, a matter of much importance, further reference to which will be found in the subsequent observations on the politics of the border.

In border warfare the Shahdilloo appear within the last few years to have acquired a complete superiority over the Turkomans. This may be put down as to some extent due to the incubus of Russian presence which weighs on the tribes, and distracts and diverts their attention. If able to combine as of old, sheer force of numbers would enable them to sweep the whole country and shut up the inhabitants in their walled villages. The Eelkhanee has at most 1,000 horse at his disposal—for the

Goklan horsemen have enough to do to guard their own property, and are also too distant to give effective aid. With this small body he is expected to keep in check from ten to fifteen times the number of Yamoot and Tekkah. His men, though good, are at their own estimate only slightly better than an equal number of Turkomans, and there is nothing in difference of "morale" to compensate for advantage of numbers. The combatants in these border conflicts are, in fact, usually so well matched in courage, skill, and in the condition of their horses and arms, that the issue depends on mere numerical superiority. Much discretion also appears to be shown; an inferior party will not, save under peculiar circumstances, fight a superior. If escape is impossible at small sacrifice, the party overmatched capitulates, and their persons, horses, and arms become the spoil of their captors. Instances there are no doubt of desperate fighting, and of bloody massacres and retaliations; but such barbarities, I found, were almost invariably the result of a meeting between the villagers with the plundering Turkomans.

The former regard the Turkomans with very different feelings from those of the regular soldier of the border. The Turkoman is to him not a source of profit and pleasure, not his *raison d'être* as he is in fact of the other, but a scourge to be resisted always, and crushed when possible without mercy. Hard earned experience has taught him better than to forego a bloody vengeance for the sake of ransoms which rarely pass out of the has ndof the chief and his relations. With, therefore, an enemy far superior in numbers, and equal in quality to his own men, it is only from the strength of the position he holds that the Eelkhanee is able to perform the task required of him. Covered by 60 miles of mountainous country, he is safe from any unexpected attack by very large numbers; and with 800 to 1,000 horsemen posted on a central point, around which extend in a semi-circle from west to north-east, the hostile "obahs," each one unsupported, and inferior in numbers, he is able to deal his blows with advantage. He can usually reckon on being superior in numbers, for a sufficient time at least, on the advantage of surprise and on a secure retreat covered by his posts of footmen. So great are these advantages that he is with 1,000 men able not only to keep in check 10,000 daring enemies, whose profession is war and plunder, but to plunder them so successfully as to enrich himself and his followers. The horses and cattle of the Koords are supplied entirely by the Turkomans, and are their chief wealth. A batch of Turkoman prisoners picked up from some outlying "obah" is immediately valued at its equivalent in horse-flesh, or in camels, and a negotiation, which may be prolonged for many months, commenced.

Women have even a higher value than men, for there is usually no delay in their ransom, and the Koords may occasionally name their own price. The favourite wife of an Aksakal of the Tekkah was a prisoner in the chief's house at the time of my visit, and I was informed by him that he had offered in vain, in exchange for

her, the best horse in the "Atok," and any sum of money that might be named; for the chief wished to keep him in attendance for political objects. This system of barter has its advantages, for while it no doubt tends to perpetuate the state of warfare, rapine and fued, from which the country has long suffered, it robs it of many of its horrors.

The Koords have in short so entirely the upper hand of their neighbours that if other parts of the Persian border were equally well guarded, the nomads would be reduced to betake themselves to the more peaceful pursuits of agriculture and commerce.

The Goklan, the Yamoot, and the Akhal Tekkah are the tribes with whom the Eelkhanee has direct communication, but there is on his border a small colony which on various grounds is worthy of close attention.

Karakalla. The little fort of Karakalla on the northern Attrek tributary has in many respects an important position. It dominates both the Yamoot and Akhal pastures, and has been long the bone of contention between those tribes. From it also is open a good road into the Attrek and Gurgan valleys, and across both these streams into Persia. Held by either the Yamoot or Akhal, it is a standing menace to the Persian border, and its occupation by the Koords would be intolerable to both tribes. For many years preceding 1860, it had been held by the Akhal Tekke. In that year a Persian force took and destroyed it, but made no attempt at occupation, the distance and difficulty of access being too great to leave any hope of success in the face of the strenuous opposition that was certain to be aroused. In 1869 it was again taken and destroyed after some fighting. Lately after the occupation of Khiva a colony of Goklān with a few Yamoots escaping from that place rebuilt and occupied it. They now own a nominal allegiance to the Eelkhanee, and through his influence their occupation appears to be acquiesced in by the tribes directly concerned.

The Russians are credited with an intention to occupy the position on the ground that the Goklan occupants are their subjects, being Khivans, and it is probable that they may also consider it as on their bank of the Attrek.

The position, as I have before noted, is also an important one with reference to any military movements from the Attrek directed against the settlement of the Akhal in the "Atok." Its occupation by Persia should be the first step towards an extension of authority up to the Attrek, and the opening of friendly communication with the Tekkah Turkomans.

Koochan.

Extent and boundaries. The chiefship of Koochan is, as before noted, the most flourishing and populous of the districts of Khorassan. It extends north-east from the border of Boojnoord, 50 miles, to the border of Radkan, the district of the Kywanloo Koords, and from the crest of the "Atak" range, south-west, about 40 to 50 miles, to the watershed of the Shah Jehan Mountain, where it borders on Boguiray, Bam, and Saffiabad, and Isferayeen; a total area of about 2,000 to 2,500 square miles. Its western boundary runs

about north from the border of Isferayeen, and passing 14 to 15 miles east of Bujnoord, includes the Kushkhana plateau, and strikes the Atok near Yangi Kalla. Thence the northern boundary follows the Atok crest to a point eight to ten miles west of Duringar, and nearly opposite Annau. The eastern boundary runs from this south-east to Kalla Yusuf Khan, and across the plain to the border of the Sultan Maidan. The whole of these boundaries are tolerably well defined.

Plain. The area above given includes the whole of the fertile plain of Koochan and Sherwan, which has a total length from Kalla Yusuf Khan to the Tungi Rezabad of 50 miles, and an average width of about 20 miles, making in all, 1000 square miles.

Mountains, north. This level plain occupies nearly the centre of the district. North the slopes rise easily into the wide, open, ravine-cleft, plateaux, which reach to the Atok crest, and descend in an abrupt rugged wall, supported by buttress-like spurs, into the plain. A central line of rocky peaks traverses these plateaux from north-west to south-east.

Mountains, south. To the south the slopes rise more abruptly to a rugged chain, marked by the prominent peak of Shah Jehan, the southern spurs of which fall into the Isferayeen and Jouven plain.

The extent of plateaux land is difficult to estimate, but it cannot be less than one-fourth of the northern section of the mountainous portion of the district, which would give an area of about 250 square miles.

Prominent peaks. The principal mountain peaks of the chiefship are in the south, Shah Jehan, reputed the highest mountain in Khorassan and the Takht-i-Mirza, rising from the southern chain of the Eastern Alburz. Both must have an elevation of from 9,000 to 10,000 feet.

From the northern chain rises the line of peaks or elevated ridges before mentioned, running from the Atok, south-east, and known as Koh Giffan, Patlagoo, Bughun, Koonja Khor, Choeenlee and Dooz. The drainage of these mountains falls north-east into the Garmekhans or upper Attrek, and west into the northern tributaries of the Attrek.

Streams. The only considerable streams are the Germekhans, also known to the Persians as the Soombar,* though that name is not in local use, which drains the plateau north of Koochan, flows east, and then bending west, traverses the Koochan plain; and the Deregez stream, which rises north-east of Koochan, and north of the main watershed line, and flows east for about 15 to 20 miles, into Duringar, a valley of Deregez. Shah Jehan and Takht-i-Mirza send three small streams into the Koochan plain, and from the north flow three streams, one from the Isfijir valley, one from the Giffan valley, and one from Kooshkhana, which joins the Attrek in Bujnoord.

Roads and routes. The principal roads of the districts have been already described.

* Soombar.

They are—

1. The main road to Mashad by Chinaran. Passable for wheeled carriage.
2. To Deregez by Kalla Yusuf Khan and the Allaho Akhar pass. Passable for laden mules.
3. To Bujnoord by Chinaran. Rough, but passable for wheeled carriage.
4. To Bujnoord by Rezabad. Passable for mules.
5. To Deregez by Choeenlee, Duringar and Dawand pass. Passable for mules.
6. To the Atak by Durbadam. Passable for mules.
7. To the Atak by Aughaz. Passable for mules.
8. To the Atak by Kushkhana. Passable for mules.
9. To Subzwar across the Takht-i-Mirza and Iserayeen plain. Passable for mules.
10. By Bam, Seffiabad and the Jouven plain to Nishapoor. Passable for mules.

Koochan and Sherwan plain.

The Koochan and Sherwan plain, which has an elevation of 3,800 feet at Koochan, and falls away gently to the west, is by far the most fertile tract in Khorassan; nearly the whole of its area is under cultivation, and is irrigated by numerous streams, springs, and "kanats." The unirrigated land, even in ordinary seasons, produce good crops of grain, returning ten to fifteen fold. It is covered with fine villages buried in extensive groves, gardens, and vineyards.

The whole chiefship is divided into seven belooks, but a less minute and arbitrary division by its natural features will facilitate description.

Koochan.

About 13 miles from the head of the plain lies the town of Koochan, the residence of the chief, and a place of some importance, but ruinous in appearance. The walls were destroyed many years ago, and have not been rebuilt, and the town itself suffered severely from an earthquake in 1872. The Attrek stream flows past it on the north, and extensive vineyards enclose it on all sides. The northern mountain slopes reach to within one mile of the town.

To the south the plain extends for about 15 miles.

There is a considerable appearance of life and activity in the streets of the town and bazaars, and it is evidently populous, but its wretched condition gives an unfavourable impression. Even massive masonry buildings have been destroyed from their foundation. It has a population, chiefly Zaferanloo Koords, of about 1,500 households.

Besides the town there are, along the course of the Attrek and in the hill skirts, not less than from 80 to 100 villages.

The soil is alluvial and fertile, and silk, cotton, and rice are raised; but the staple product is grain, for which there are numerous and easily accessible markets.

Sherwan.

In the lower part of the plain about 30 miles from Koochan, and 10 miles from the defile known as the Tung-i-Rezabad, is the town of Sherwan, a thriving, clean, populous little place, well

protected, after the fashion of the country, by walls and towers. It is governed, together with the adjacent villages, by the son of the Koochan chief, Abul Hasan Khan. There are 10 to 12 villages within a circle of five miles of the town. The soil is fertile and better watered than that of the upper valley.

Villages of the plateaux.

The plateaux north of Koochan which drain east into the Attrek and west into the Deregez stream, have in all about a dozen villages, some of them of considerable size. They have an average elevation of 5,000 feet, and the soil is light and fertile, bearing good crops of grain, returning from ten to fifteen fold without irrigation. Save in spring, these high lands have a bleak, cheerless aspect, being destitute of trees, and swept constantly by high winds.

The villages stand out in wide undulating stretches of arable land, unsheltered and unscreened by the usual circle of gardens and vineyards.

Villages of the northern valleys.

The valleys descending from the plateaux and the elevated ridges of the mountains north of Koochan, have many fine villages. They are well watered, have fertile soil, and extensive groves and vineyards. The higher elevations are wooded with juniper and the ravines with the barberry, wild pomegranate, and thorn brakes. In spring there is good pasturage. The principal villages of this tract are Shorak and Durbadam, in a wild glen at the head of the Deregez stream, numbering, with hamlets, 150 houses of Turks and Koords; Giffan to the south-west of the last, so named from a small stream which flows past Sherwan into the Attrek; and the Kushkhana villages, Firoza, Garmab, and other large villages lying on a plateau, just south of the crest of the Atok range, draining into the Attrek.

Villages of the southern mountains.

The southern mountains have on their slopes many large villages with gardens and vineyards, and large extents of unirrigated arable land. The limit of cultivation extends far up towards the crest of the range, and the slopes afford fine pasturage. The upper villages are inhabited chiefly by Geraili Turks; the lower, in common with the villages in the plain of Koochan, by Zaferanloo Koords. The villages in this tract number from 20 to 30, exclusive of many small hamlets. It is known as the Belook-i-Janoobi.

Population.

The mass of the population of Koochan are Zaferanloo Koords, who may be estimated at about four-fifths of the whole. The balance includes Turks of the Geraili tribe, a few families of the old Atak tribes, now known from the names of the towns they inhabited, as Annouis, Ishkabadis, Mihnais, and probably also of Turk origin, and a sprinkling of Ajam or Persians.

There are from 2,000 to 3,000 tents of nomads of the Zaferanloo and Amanloo tribes, moving for the most part about the skirts of the plain and in the southern mountains. The Zaferanloo at the time of their first settlement had, according to their traditions, 24,000 families, or about 120,000 souls. If so, they must have decreased much in numbers, for at the highest estimate they cannot have now more than half that number.

From an average of the population of the villages that I passed through and careful local inquiry, I have made the following computation, which is, I think, near the truth, though possibly slightly excessive:—

Town of Koochan - - -	9,000
Town of Sherwan - - -	6,000
Koochan and Sherwan plain -	40,000
Mountains, north - - -	10,000
,, south - - -	8,000
Nomad - - - -	15,000
Total population -	88,000

The numbers estimated by several of the officials whom I met were much in excess of this, amounting to 200,000, and there certainly is more appearance of life in the landscape than in any part of Persia that I have yet seen. The plain is an almost unbroken sheet of cultivation, and the villages cover a large extent of ground, their size being however exaggerated by the fine gardens and groves surrounding them.

Material condition.

The Zaferanloo are a fine robust race, the men of good stature and stout, with usually fair complexions as compared with the people of other parts. They appeared invariably well fed and clothed, and their villages neatly built, clean, and enlivened by troops of children of all ages,—an unusual sight. They bear a high character for courage, and were always civil, hospitable, and honest in their dealings. Their independent manly bearing marked them as superior to the inhabitants of the southern districts, and is also an evidence of their prosperous condition. They have now enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace for over 30 years. The villagers of the northern mountains only are liable to molestation from the Turkomans, and even there the natural strength of the country is such that they are more usually the assailants than the assailed, and are able to maintain themselves successfully at many points only a few miles from large settlements of the Turkomans. Conflicts between small parties from either side of the border are common enough. When large numbers meet it is usually the Koord horsemen backed by the armed villagers who are the aggressors.

The feelings of feudal attachment to their chief, and of tribal union, are more marked among the Zaferanloo than among the Shahdilloo, a circumstance that is attributable, I believe, to their superior material condition, and to the personal character of the chief and his son, whose name was constantly in their mouths. There were complaints of exaction and of over assessment, but their condition showed that at any rate they were left a very sufficient share of the profits of agriculture. Travelling slowly through the country and lodging always in the houses of the villagers, I had good opportunities of observing their condition and appreciating fairly the value of the complaints that were almost invariably made and would probably be made under any

circumstances. Their chief is proud and fond of show and state, which of course involves expenditure, and he is also said to be addicted to hoarding (though liberal enough with his dependants and relatives), but the conclusion I arrived at was that he placed no unfair burdens on the backs of his subjects.

Koochan is beyond dispute the most productive tract in Khorassan; it may in fact be termed the granary of the province. Its surplus produce finds its way into the markets of Mashad and of all the towns of the eastern borders; and it is in seasons when the crops of the southern districts fail by reason of drought that its value is most felt. Resources.

The drainage of two great chains of mountains give it unequalled advantages of irrigation, and large tracts of corn land lying at a considerable elevation, sheltered from the parching south winds, and within reach of the moisture-laden breezes from the Caspian, and the fertile plains and valleys to the east of it, ensure a fair supply of grain even when the annual rainfall is deficient. The following extract translated from the Shah's diary in Khorassan will show how fully the importance of this tract is appreciated, and it is also worthy of special note that nearly the whole of it lies north of the main branch of the Attrek.

"The soil of that place (Koochan) is the most productive of any in the vicinity of Mashad. The corn land, which is both irrigated and unirrigated, is in a favourable year the source of supply of several of the towns of Khorassan, and so dependent are they upon this supply that any disturbance or accident of seasons occurring in Koochan likely to injure the crops, at once affects the prices current in all the towns of the province."

Save a small proportion of the townspeople and of the nomads the whole population is engaged in the production of corn. The amount of silk and cotton raised is small, and it is only within the last two or three years, since the establishment of a Russian mercantile agent there, that any has been exported.

In the absence of a regular assessment of the revenue which is levied yearly in the shape of contributions, very much at the will of the chief, and with reference always to other considerations besides that of the circumstances of the village or belook to be assessed, it was difficult to arrive at any exact estimate of the surplus produce of the district, but calculated at a fair average from that of several villages that I visited, it cannot be less than 30,000 to 40,000 kharwars, or about 10,000 tons. A very large amount it may appear in proportion to the numbers of the population; but it must be remembered that agriculture, and especially the cultivation of wheat, is the only industry of the district, and that the unirrigated lands capable of bearing crops are of great extent, and return ten and fifteen fold for the labour of ploughing to the depth of a few inches and sowing broadcast. On the plateaux the same land is never sown two seasons in succession, each field or hill slope being allowed a fallow of from one to two, or three years.

With the recovery of the ruined districts to the south the abnormal extension of the cultivation of the last few years will cease, but it is not likely that production will much decrease, as wheat will no doubt always fetch a remunerative price among the silk and cotton producers of Subzwar and Nishapoor.

The price of wheat and barley was shortly after harvest at:—

Koochan -	- 5 maunds	= lbs.	32·65	per kran.
Sherwan -	- 5 „	= „	32·65	„ „
In the villages	- 6 „	= „	39·18	„ „

The rates are kept up by exportation. At Bujnoord, though less is produced the prices were lower.

The stores of corn of the Koochan villages would prove an invaluable resource to any force occupying Mashad. For even should the people be hostile, the country is so open and easy that a force of cavalry might reach Koochan in a few hours without any fear of being entangled in mountainous or difficult ground.

Irregular forces.

The enrolled or paid forces of Koochan consist, in the first place, of a body of 1,000 horse, recruited among the Zaferanloo. They are mounted and armed by the chief, and are thoroughly efficient for the work required of them. In fact so good are both horses and men that a little better discipline and better arms only are required to make them thoroughly efficient light horse, admirably fitted to perform what are now the most important duties of cavalry. In common with all the horsemen of this border, whether Koord or Turkoman, they are unused to charge home as cavalry in Europe are, or rather were expected to do, with sword or lance. Their weapon is the gun, which they use always, if possible, at speed, either when circling round, or retreating from their enemy. The main body of Koochan horse were absent at the time of my visit on a raid against the Turkoman "obahs," but those that I saw were not less well mounted and armed than the men of other parts of the border.

Each horseman receives from 10 to 15 tomans in cash, and an assignment on a village for corn to about the same value, making his pay up to about 10 rupees per mensem. He lives also, save when at Koochan, at free quarters, and has a share of such plunder as falls into the chief's hands. That this is sometimes considerable I had evidence, for while at Koochan I witnessed the return of a party with a booty valued at 15,000 to 20,000 rupees.

As in Bujnoord no horses are bred, the chief only having a few mares, he is entirely dependent for remounts on purchase or exchange of Turkoman prisoners. This dependence on an enemy is the weak point in the organization of the defensive forces all along the Turkoman border, for it makes it impossible to increase the number of mounted men, or to supply losses in war rapidly. With an unlimited supply of men fit to ride, the chief would thus with the utmost efforts be unable to collect more than 1,500 horse.

The Kushkhana plateau, which has fine pastures, furnishes from 200 to 300 of the Koochan horse, and a body of that number is

usually stationed there to defend the weakest point of the border, and to be ready to raid without delay in any direction he chief may direct. At Sherwan there are also 30 to 40 "Shamkhalchis," mounted matchlock-men.

About 1,000 to 1,200 footmen are paid by the chief and employed in the watch towers on the border; of these 500 to 600 are furnished by Sherwan and Kushkhana, the rest by Koochan, and villages in the vicinity. The men are paid at the rate of 24 rupees per annum with an allowance of 1,300 lbs. of corn.

The adult male peasants of the district must number not less than from 15,000 to 20,000, and a large proportion are armed. The border villagers are inured to war, and are fair marksmen. In their own mountains they would prove formidable adversaries.

Positions to be guarded.

The force above detailed has a long line of frontier to defend against an enemy immensely superior in number, and able to increase his superiority almost indefinitely by calling in aid from the main body of the tribe.

As in the case of Bujnoord, it is only the great natural strength of the country that enables the small body of Koords, not only to hold its own on an extended line within sight of the enemy's settlements, but to retaliate most effectively, and to mount and maintain itself at his expense.

The position of the Zafferanloo is even stronger than that of their kinsmen to the west, who are always liable to have their left flank turned by the penetrable (though difficult) country about the Attrek tributaries. They are covered by the latter on one flank and by Deregez on the other. Their front is equally strong. The Atok range forms a perfect scarp of several thousand feet, at the foot of which lie the Turkoman "obahs" and on the crest the frontier post and villages. The gaps in this scarped wall are very few, the only really vulnerable point being the Kushkhana plateau, where however the villagers can muster in force, and are well able to take care of themselves.

In such a strong position a careful guard against surprise is all that is requisite to ensure safety.

The line of the Zaferanloo posts commences west of Kalta Chenar, which lies 3,000 or 4,000 feet above Annau, and following the ridge of Koh Asalma, a great mass of the Atok range, crosses into the Attrek watershed, and passing round Kushkhana joins the Shahdilloo line near Mana.

The eastern posts are supported directly from Koochan, from which they are distant on an average about 30 miles by road. The western from Sherwan, where the Khan's son usually resides. The distances to be traversed are from 15 to 20 miles.

Tenure of chiefships.

The chief, or as he is sometimes styled the Eelkhanee of the Zaferanloo, holds his country on somewhat the same terms as the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord. He is bound to give military service when required, and to guard his border and the districts in his rear; but in consideration of the superior productiveness of his country he is required to pay a large sum yearly in the shape of

revenue. This sum has been gradually increased until it now reaches 40,000 tomans per annum. In addition to this a yearly tribute in horses and gold coin is exacted. These terms are easy when the wealth of the district is considered, and the complete exemption of the people from regular military service is at the price a cheap boon.

In addition to the protection of his own border on which the security of the districts in rear depends, the chief is bound to aid the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord, but such assistance has only twice in a period of many years been required, and the feud between the two tribes makes any cordial co-operation impossible. The chief of Deregez also has the right to demand assistance, which is frequently and willingly rendered and is most necessary. With the weak force and exposed position of Deregez, its tenure would in fact be almost impossible, if the 1,000 horsemen of Koochan were not held ready to give prompt aid.

The present Khan of Koochan, Ameer Hossein Khan, is a man of 45 years of age, and the most prominent and influential chieftain in Khorassan. He bears a high character for personal courage, and has well earned the title of Shuja-ud-dowla. He is however ambitious, proud, and extravagant in his personal expenditure, qualities which secure respect while they interfere with his popularity. With his ambition, he does not appear to combine any of the talents that would make it dangerous, but is, on the contrary, shallow and imprudent. He was popularly believed to be aiming at the chief post in the province, and with his wealth, influence, and a great assumption of piety, which secured him the good-will of the priesthood, the prize was hardly beyond his reach, if his pride had not brought him into collision with the late Governor-General, a mishap that has caused his temporary banishment and disgrace, if not his ruin. In the winter of 1873 he refused to attend a summons of the Governor-General to reply to some charges brought against him. A force was taken by the Governor-General in person as far as Sarkhan, a village a few miles from Koochan. The Koords held by their chief, and prepared to resist the royal troops, and open war was only averted by concessions on both sides. The season was very unfavourable, and the attitude of the Zaferanloo determined, while the Koochan chief knew well that the ultimate result of resistance could only be most disastrous to himself. He was allowed to remain in his chiefship, but on a payment of a heavy bribe under the name of a fine, to his superior, and the troops returned to Mashad. He had however to deal with an implacable and powerful enemy, and has since been forced to present himself, first at Mashad and then at Teheran, and has suffered imprisonment and confiscation of all his property, while his son has been driven into open rebellion, and is now forced to seek an asylum with the Turkomans. Among the Zaferanloo I found the chief unpopular. His pride and the exactions necessary to maintain his lavish expenditure, and his harsh treatment of his son were usually alleged as the chief causes. The latter cause has probably the most influence with the tribe, for his son, Abul Hasan

Abul Hasan Khan.

Khan, is idolised by his followers. He has already, though but 20 years of age, given proofs of great courage and skill as a leader, and his open-handed liberality is loudly extolled. The influence acquired by him is so great as to have aroused his father's jealousy, and he was about two years ago deprived of his government of Sherwan and imprisoned. Better counsels, or perhaps prudence, and a forecast of the troubles that have since befallen him, led the Khan to a reconciliation. He pardoned his son and entrusted him with the direct administration of the whole district. Since then there has been peace in the country, and it is a misfortune for the tribe that the family should have succumbed to external enemies.

The present Khan is a son of Reza Kooli Khan, who maintained himself for some time in rebellion against the authority of Fath Ali Shah, and was only reduced by the exertions of Abbas Mirza with a large army directed by European officers. He has an elder brother, Koordoo Khan, residing in Koochan, but having no influence or authority.

Relations with Turkomans.

The relations of the Koochan chief and of the people with the Turkomans are similar to those of the other border chiefs. A state of open warfare, or what in any other country would be so considered, does not interfere with much intercourse of an almost friendly nature. Turkomans and Koords come and go across the border, while each side watches closely to guard against surprise, and to seize promptly any opportunity of assailing the other with advantage. There were many Akhal Turkomans in the town, and at Sherwan, and I found that the chiefs were well acquainted with their movements and apparently able to exercise some influence over them. The Akhal is the only tribe that has direct communication with Koochan. The Yamoots are beyond reach, and the Merve Turkomans deal only with the chiefs of Deregez and Kelat.

Deregez.—The petty chiefship of Deregez, comprising a single fertile valley and the mountains enclosing it, is the only Persian possession on the northern watershed of the Alburz, east of Asterabad, save a few small villages in the Kelat Atak. It has been maintained with very varying fortunes against the constant attacks of a powerful enemy, not by the weak, unsympathetic and dilatory efforts of the Government, but solely through the tenacious resistance of the brave and hardy tribesmen, who have clung to their fertile lands through every adversity, returning again and again with unconquerable persistence to devastated homes and ruined fields and vineyards.

Boundaries.

The boundaries of the chiefship are fairly well defined. The small stream rising in the Maidan Khana plateau, on the direct route from Mashad and Koochan to Deregez, known as the Rood-i-Kibkan, and lower down as the Rood-i-Var or Vert, may be held to mark the boundary line. There are no villages on the lower course of this stream, but its water when it reaches the plain is diverted to some of the Deregez Atak villages.

From the Maidan Khana plateau the southern and western

boundary line of Deregez runs along the main chain of the northern section of Alburz, which divides it from Koochan, and crossing the Deregez stream above Duringar strikes north to the crest of the Atak chain, known there as Koh Asalma. The northern boundary runs thence along the crest of the ridge, and descends to the plain, east of Gawars, the most easterly "obah" of the Akhal, and skirting the "Atok" villages joins the Kelat border.

The tract thus included consists of the southern slopes of, and spurs descending from the mountains of Koochan, the whole open portion of the valley of the Deregez stream, and the spur of the Atok chain enclosing it to the south. Its total length from east to west is nearly 40 miles, and its average breadth to the outermost Atok villages about 30 miles, giving an area of about 1,200 square miles, of which it may be reckoned 400 square miles is level and more or less culturable.

Plain or basin of Deregez.

The basin or valley is one of the most favoured spots in Khorassan. It receives the whole drainage of a valley 70 to 80 miles long and completely encircled by mountains, rising at many points up to 7,000 and 8,000 feet in height. It has an elevation of only 1,200 feet at Mohammadabad, a fertile soil and fine pasturage. From the crest of the Allaho Akbar pass, which overhangs the valley, 23 large villages, each with extensive gardens and vineyards may be counted, and cultivation extends in an unbroken sheet from the slopes of the mountains on either side to the river banks.

To the south-east and west the mountains rise to a great height, and form an almost unbroken wall, with short, steep, buttress-like spurs; north a chain of lower hills, rising however at one point to a considerable height, completes the enclosure.

There is a gap in the west, where the stream enters, and another north-west, known as the Dahana-i-Ishkabad, and a third north, by which the stream gains the ocean-like expanse of the Khivan desert.

Deregez Atak.

Passing this gap and the low hills confining it the character of the country and soil changes at once. The soil becomes sandy and saline, and the hill slopes barren. The whole aspect of the landscape is arid, parched, and forbidding, save where the course of the stream and the lands irrigated from it chequer it with patches of cultivated land, green pastures, and thickets of tamarisk, willow, alder, and thorny scrub. The villages lie along the border of the stream, and to the right and left, to a distance of eight to ten miles from the hill slopes, and form each one, a little oasis in the sandy desert. In spring a green herbage, affording good pasturage, springs up, covering the plain wherever it is not already covered by shifting sands.

Mountains.

The principal peaks of the enclosing mountains are the Zarrin Koh, north-north-west of the chief village (about 6,000 feet); the Koh Kochar, standing isolated at the west end of the basin, and having an elevation of about 4,000 feet; Koh Asalma, west of the basin standing far up on the north side of the stream;

Koh Aladagh, also to the west on the south side; and the Koh Dooz a little to the south of west. The last three not less than 8,000 feet in height.

The lower hills, and hill skirts, are of soft marls, and shales weathered into easy slopes; the higher, masses of limestone and slates. There are no forest trees, and even the characteristic juniper is rarely seen; but the pasturage and herbage are more luxuriant than on the southern face of the chain, and the ravines are well filled with thickets of barberry, dwarf maple, and other deciduous shrubs.

Deregez stream.

The Deregez stream, which is the largest of the streams flowing north from the "Atak" range, drains the plateaux north-west of Koochan, flows west through the glen of Shorak Durbadam, and through a narrow defile enclosed by cliffs of great height, into the glen of Duringar, the first villages of Deregez, and thence winding between rugged hills enters the basin of Deregez, and traversing it in an easterly direction for 13 or 14 miles bends north to the "Atak." Its whole course is about 80 miles, and where unreduced by irrigation it has a depth of 2½ feet and a width of 20 feet. About 16 miles from the Durband or gap by which the "Atak" is gained, its waste waters are lost in the desert. If unreduced by numerous irrigation channels, it would no doubt reach the hollows of the Tejen.

The principal routes from the Deregez valley are—

1. East, to Merve across the desert. A caravan route.
2. East and south-east, to Abwert, Chardeh, and Sarraks. A caravan route.
3. East, to Kelat by Igdalik. Practicable for mules.
4. South to Mashad and Koochan by the Allaho Akbar pass. Practicable for mules.
5. West and south-west by the Dawand pass to Koochan. Practicable for mules and camels.
6. North-west to Ishkabad in the Akhal "Atak." Practicable for mules and camels.

Numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5 have been before described.

Principal villages.

Mohamadabad.

The principal villages of Deregez are Mohamadabad, Chapooshloo, and Nowkandan. The first stands two miles from the northern range of hills, and about that distance from the stream, and is enclosed in a broad circle of woods, vineyards, and gardens. It numbers 700 houses, is clean, and well built, and defended by a good wall standing on a rampart of earth, at the base of which is a deep ditch. Both rampart and ditch are as usual deficient in flanking defence, but the place is much stronger than the forts of the country usually are. The walls form a rectangle of about 400 yards by 500 yards. On the north-west side is a high mound, the site of an ancient fire temple, from which a good view of the interior is obtained. The village is the residence of the Khan, and the place of refuge of the inhabitants of the small villages and hamlets for some miles round.

Chapooshloo is distant eight miles south by road from Mohamadabad, and divided from it by a low rocky ridge. It was

nearly destroyed by the Tekkah Turkomans about four years ago. Though many houses are still in ruins, the walls are kept in good repair, and its vineyards and gardens are extensive and productive. It is the residence of one of the chief's half-brothers, who with 100 horsemen watches the eastern side of the valley. The population numbers about 400 households.

Nowkhandan. Nowkandan is a fine village, the residence of two of the chief's brothers. It lies eight miles north-west of Mohamadabad on the banks of the stream, and numbers 700 houses. Its vineyards and gardens are said to be more productive than any in the valley.

Population. The population of Deregez is a mixed one, formed from the various Toork and Koord tribes of the border. The aboriginal Persian population was probably swept out of the valley by the first waves of Turanian conquest, and there are now no traces left of it save, perhaps, some high circular mounds, which, according to local belief, were the sites of fire temples. The only evidence of former antiquity that tells any intelligible tale is a small masonry Imamzada with a Cufic inscription, dating some 700 or 800 years back. Of the inhabitants of that period even there is only this single trace. The oldest tribe, that is, the tribe that has been longest settled, now in the valley, is that of the chief of Deregez, whose ancestors migrated from Karshi, on the Oxus, and were granted the village of Choopooshloo. They form, however, but a small proportion; the rest being made up of Afshars, Gerailis, and Koords of all the tribes living on the other side of the range, who have settled in the valley at different times, taking the places of families slaughtered in their homes or carried off into captivity by the Turkomans. Within the last five years even the loss from this cause has amounted to 1,200 families, whose lands are only slowly being brought back into cultivation by new comers from the highlands.

The people of the few villages on the south side of the Allaho Akbar pass are Kywanloo Koords from Rādkan, from 50 to 100 families. In the east of the valley the villages are inhabited by Toorks and Afshars, to the west from Nowkhandan upwards, the population is entirely Koordish. There are in all, in the valley, in addition to the three principal villages, about 30 small fortified hamlets, bringing the population up to about 12,000 souls. In the "Atak" are 20 villages and hamlets, with a mixed population of Toorks, Koords, and Turkomans, who have settled there under the Khan's protection. They pay no revenue, but are useful as an outer line of defence. If the population of the "Atak" and of the mountains and glens surrounding the valley be added to that of the valley, a total, at a rough estimate, of 18,000 souls is reached, and this is, I am inclined to believe, rather above than below the mark. A large and comparatively rapid increase may, I believe, be anticipated, for the country has entered on a period of unequalled tranquillity and security. There were no losses from the famine such as must check increase in other parts for at least one generation, and there is an abundance of waste land awaiting the plough.

From want of a market the production of grain in Deregez scarcely exceeds the wants of the agricultural population. A small quantity is exported to Rādkan and Mashad, but only a continuance of very high prices can repay transport over the difficult pass of Allaho Akbar. Resources.

The soil of the valley is fertile and water plentiful. With these advantages and no scarcity of hands, the construction of a good road connecting it with the interior districts would at once stimulate agriculture, and vastly improve the condition of the people. There is room, I was informed, in the valleys and glens ascending from it for at least 5,000 families in addition to the present population.

The soil of the "Atak," where not covered by shifting sand and irrigated, is exceedingly fertile. The grain crops return from 20 to 25 fold. Cotton and rice are grown, the latter in sufficient quantities to admit of considerable exportation to the highlands. The tract between the Akhal "obahs" and Deregez "Atak" is capable of supporting from 10,000 to 15,000 additional families. The price of grain in the villages of Deregez was, barley 10 maunds per kran, wheat 8 maunds, equal to 125 lbs. and 140 lbs. English, per 1 rupee.

A body of 800 horsemen is mounted, armed, and kept up by the Khan, as a condition of his tenure. I was fortunate enough to see nearly the whole of these, and a finer and better mounted force it would be difficult to find. Very few of their horses were under 15 hands, and all were in good condition and quite above the standard of the Turkoman breed in shape, bone, and endurance. This last is the characteristic quality of the breed. The source of supply is the same as elsewhere on the border, but from their closer connexion with the Turkomans the Deregez men have better opportunities of mounting themselves than the Koords. A force of 1,500 to 2,000 armed footmen could, I was reliably informed, be collected at any of the principal villages in 24 hours, and as the whole of the population is armed, and all are prepared by a life of constant warfare and alarm to defend their lands and hearths at a moment's notice, this force might speedily be doubled by contingents from the mountains and the upper valley. The arms of the villagers are inferior to those of the wealthier populations of Koochan and Bujnoord, who have usually good rifles made in Mashad and other towns of Khorassan. Irregular forces.

Exposed as the whole northern border of the chiefship is to sudden attacks by overwhelming forces from the desert and the Akhal "Atak," the burden of self-protection falls heavily on the people. In the "Atak," where the Khan's cavalry can usually only arrive in time to pursue the assailants after all the mischief in their power has been done, the whole population may be said to be constantly on guard. Every village keeps watch day and night on its walls, and every gang of sowers and reapers goes to work matchlock in hand, and stations watchmen on the high

round towers that dot the field in all directions at very short intervals.

The inner line of defence extends from the heights above the Rood Var, east of the valley, to Kalta Chenar, on the Koochan border, and every pass and pathway has its watch tower occupied constantly by parties of villagers.

Tenure of chiefship.

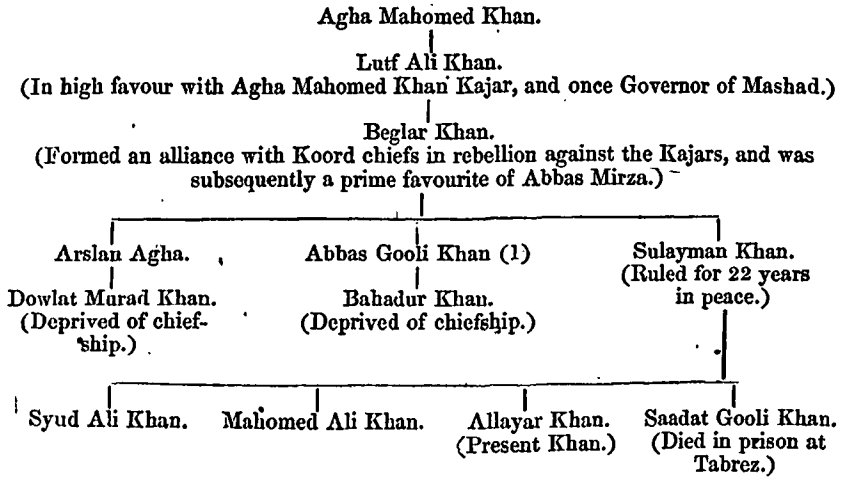
The Khan holds his lands free of any revenue, but subject to the payment of a yearly tribute in the shape of presents of money and horses, the amount of which regulates the treatment that he receives at the hands of the provincial and central Governments. A sum of 750 tomans is allotted yearly from the Mashad treasury to pay a portion of the horsemen entertained for the defence of the border. Formerly 1,500 tomans was the amount of the grant, but even that was quite insufficient; for the pay of 800 men would alone amount to at least 8,000 tomans. The arrangement is, however, nearly nominal, for no portion of the subsidy leaves the hands of the officials at Mashad.

Origin of chief's family.

The family of the chiefs of Deregez is, as before mentioned, of Toork origin. Shortly after the time of the birth of Nadir Shah, a petty Khan of Karshi named Baba Khan, Beglar Begi, migrated to Persia with a few hundred men of his own race, and was granted lands at Deregez by Baba Ahmed Beg Afshar, Governor of Abiverd and of the country round. They rebuilt the village of Chapooshloo, which had been destroyed, and brought its fertile lands into cultivation. After some years' quiet occupation, a new Governor, who was no other than Nadir, was appointed to Abiverd; Baba Khan became a prime favourite of Nadir, and served him devotedly. He followed him through all his campaigns, and was rewarded, after his accession to the throne of Persia, by the Governorship of Herat, and subsequently of other provinces of Persia. He was killed at the siege of Bokhara some years later. His nephew, Behbood Khan, who commanded some of Nadir's troops in Bokhara, returned as Governor of Abiverd, and was witness to the destruction of all the flourishing towns of the Atok during the period of anarchy in Khorassan that attended the wars of the Zend and the Kajar. He was himself slain by a Turkoman arrow. Unable without aid to withstand the constant attacks of their Turkoman neighbours, the settled population of the "Atok" retired, after severe losses, to the highlands. Agha Mahomed Khan, son of Behbood Khan, who had succeeded to the Governorship, occupied the valley of Deregez, having, as Khorassan was at that time almost indedendent, no title but that of the strongest. He and his family have since maintained themselves by their own swords alone, for the support of their "suzerains" the Shahs of Persia, was always wanting when most required. Had they been dependent on it they would most assuredly have been driven back to the barren mountains behind them, while, but for their own sturdy resistance, their seat would have been occupied by one or other of their neighbours and enemies, the chiefs of Kelat, Radkan, and Koo-

chan. The chiefs of the latter place in fact regard the petty chiefship on their border as in some sort dependent on them, an assumption that would long ago, if not vigorously resisted, have ended in complete subjection.

The following note of the descendants of Agha Mahomed Khan, who held the chiefship, will show how chequered have been their fortunes, and how varied their relations with the sovereigns of Persia :—


Agha Mahomed Khan.
Lutf Ali Khan.
(In high favour with Agha Mahomed Khan Kajar, and once Governor of Mashad.)
Beglar Khan.
(Formed an alliance with Koord chiefs in rebellion against the Kajars, and was subsequently a prime favourite of Abbas Mirza.)
Arslan Agha.
Dowlat Murad Khan.
(Deprived of chiefship.)
Abbas Gooli Khan (1)
Bahadur Khan.
(Deprived of chiefship.)
Sulayman Khan.
(Ruled for 22 years in peace.)
Syud Ali Khan.
Mahomed Ali Khan.
Allayar Khan.
(Present Khan.)
Saadat Gooli Khan.
(Died in prison at Tabrez.)

(1.) Abbas Gooli Khan, known as the "Deli" or madman, has a curious history. His life passed in chronic rebellion, and he was once reduced only by a large force with a number of guns under Borowski, a Polish officer in the Persian service. He was subsequently imprisoned in Tabrez, from which place he made his escape and joined the "Salar," who was in rebellion at Mashad. Obtaining a pardon by timely submission, he returned to his chiefship, and distinguished himself by the most reckless bravery during the capture of Merve by the Persians. He was Governor of Merve for some time, and died there. His son, Bahadur Khan, who has been mentioned as one of the prominent residents of Mashad, succeeded him there, but was shortly driven out. He has still connections and some influence among the Turkomans.

Allayar Khan, the present holder of the chiefship, is a man of about 50 years of age, active, energetic, and intelligent. He was removed from the chiefship some years ago, but not for any disloyal conduct. His successor, Dowlat Murad Khan, showed himself quite unfit for so difficult a post. During his two years' tenure the Turkomans devastated the whole valley, shutting the people up in the larger villages. The village of Chapooshloo was taken and sacked, and it is said no less than 7,000 of the inhabitants of the valley carried off. Allayar Khan was sent back by the Hissam-us-Sultana, Governor-General of Khorassan, and has restored the country nearly to its former prosperity. Allayar Khan, the present chief.

He has two younger brothers, Mahomed Ali Khan and Syud Ali Khan, either of whom is fit to succeed to the chiefship, and a son, a boy of 12 years of age.

Relations of the Deregez chief with the provincial Government and the Turkomans.

Her tenure of the valley of Deregez, isolated as it is by the main chain of the Alburz, and not capable of paying revenue, is of little importance, save as regards her prestige, to Persia. The loss of Sarraks, for instance, would be a far more serious matter than the loss of Deregez. The chiefs have, therefore, in times of trouble, been left frequently entirely to their own devices, and have been forced to maintain themselves by connections with the Turkoman tribes which have brought them into closer relations than subsist between those tribes and any other of the border chiefs. At the same time their subjection to constant attempts on the part of their powerful neighbours to subvert their feudal independence has thrown them into the hands of the provincial Government. These causes have led to their becoming the medium of communication between the Governors of the province and the Turkomans of Akhal and Merve, and in this capacity they are now safe from local rivalry, and to great extent from injury by court intrigues at the capital.

Within the last few years a share of the importance thus derived has passed into the hands of the chief of Kelat, and the consequence is a deadly feud between the two chieftains.

In addition to political advantages the present chief of Deregez also derives some direct profit from his influence with the tribes of the desert. He is able to secure safe passage for caravans to Merve, and to secure the entry of Turkoman carriers into Persia free of molestation; and has thus drawn the scanty relics of the former trade with the Trans-Oxus territories over the rough passes leading to his isolated valley. He obtains some considerable addition to his income from the levy of customs dues.

The connection of the present chief with the Turkomans of Akhal and Merve is particularly close and friendly. He was for a long time a fugitive in their tents, and knows all their principal men. Several of the nearest "obahs" are in a manner tributary to him. There are also about 50 families of the poorer sections of the Akhal settled in the "Atak" villages. An "Akaskal" of the "obah" of Ishkabad, Pashi Khan, is the chief's agent with the tribe, and is able at any time to bring him into communication with the leading Aksakals.

KELAT-I-NADIRI.—The chiefship of Kelat-i-Nadiri occupies the greater portion of the northern face of the rugged range of mountains separating Mashad from the Atak, which may be conveniently termed, as I have before termed it, the Kelat range. It has no well defined boundaries, and this with the nature of its surface makes even a guess at its area scarcely practicable. On its southern border and on the south side of the range lie the Mashad belooks, Radkan, Dangah Choolai, and Tabatkan. North and north-east the desert intervening between the basin of the Tejen and the Atak forms its present boundary. East, it is said to extend to the Heri Rood, but the mountains and the Atak in that direction are unoccupied. West, it does not extend beyond the unoccupied valley of Abiverd.

Boundaries.

General features.

The tract thus vaguely defined has a length of 70 to 80 miles, and an average width from the crest of the range to the edge of the desert of 30 miles. It consists of a series of valleys descending from the ridge to the plain; those to the westward having a

general direction north-east, those to the eastward, nearly east-south-east. Each valley is confined by precipitous spurs, which fall away in rugged outlines to the lower ranges. These are of inconsiderable height and of easy rounded outline, being composed for the most part of clays, chalk, and marls, but they spread a most intricate maze of ravines and glens between the plain and the bases of the main spurs. The valleys, where they widen out, and many spots in the lower hills are inhabited and cultivated or capable of cultivation. Beyond the lower hills extends the hill-skirt or Atak. So large a portion of this tract is unoccupied that a better idea of the real extent and value of the chiefship will be obtained from a detail of the peopled portions only. These are,— Peopled portions.

1st.—The valley of the Ab-i-Khour, on the lower course of which stream are the villages of Chāchā.

2nd.—The valley of the Ab-i-Mihna.

3rd.—In succession to the west is the principal valley. The plateau of Kelat, the famous natural fortress of Khorassan, lies in it, and its drainage feeds a fine stream that fertilizes a portion of the Atak. The stream is known as the Ab-i-Kelat. Beyond this valley is a stretch of broken country extending to the glen of Abiverd, traversed by two or three inconsiderable streams, on the banks of which are five or six small villages.

Where these various streams reach the Atak lie the villages of that tract, extending in a line, at long intervals, skirting the base of the chain.

The plateaux of Kelat and the Atak only merit further description. The first is an elevated tract of plateau land, of considerable extent, rising in parts into mountains, and traversed by many deep valleys. Enclosing it completely is a chain of heights or ridges, so narrow, lofty, and precipitous as to form a perfect wall, penetrable only at a few points. The cliffs forming this wall, rising from their base, as they do, to a height of about 1,500 feet above the general level of the country, can owe their origin only to some violent convulsion of nature, acting upon a limited area with sufficient force to elevate and distort the whole surface. Even so the wonderful completeness and uniformity of the chance disposition of the mountainous masses forming the barrier is beyond all conception,—a phenomenon probably without parallel, and of which the most accurate drawings could alone convey any distinct impression. Plateau of Kelat.

The total length of the plateau from east to west is about 18 miles, and its breadth varies from six to ten miles, giving an area of somewhat less than 150 square miles. It slopes for the most part inwards, from the crest of the enclosing ridges, and drains into the Kelat stream. This stream rising about due south of Kelat, in the slopes of the Koh Imarat, flows round its southern wall, and enters at the north-east corner by a remarkable natural gap in the rocky boundary known as the Darband or defile of Arghoon Shah. The narrowest part of this gap, which has a width of about 40 paces, is closed by gates so constructed as to give free passage to the stream when swollen by floods. The whole length of the passage or gap is Extent. Kelat stream.

about 400 yards, which gives the width of base of the enclosing wall at that point. The crest, 500 feet above the stream, is so narrow that a single man with difficulty finds foot-hold on it.

Clearing this remarkable defile the stream widens out over a pebbly bed, and passing under a small fort defended by two guns, and round the little village of Arghoon Shah of 30 houses, enters a green and fertile valley, into which the plateaux on either side descend easily, leaving between their slopes a strip of level ground through which the stream meanders gently, shaded by thickets of fruit and forest trees. The moist ground lying between the loops and bends of the stream bears fine crops of rice, and the hill slopes are terraced and covered with orchards and vineyards, small in extent, but very productive. Passing the village of Gio Gombaz, the residence of the chief, the valley widens slightly till it reaches the centre of the plateau, where the stream enters a deep rocky gorge, and flows nearly north between precipitous banks to the northern wall of enclosing heights, through which it passes by a gap similar to that of Arghoon Shah, known as the Darband-i-Napht. Thence it winds through a maze of low hills to the Atak, where its waters irrigate the rice fields of Chardeh. The stream where it flows through Kelat is clear and bright, but its water is said by the natives to be impregnated from its source with naphtha. From this or some other cause, possibly from the malaria that it generates in its passage through a low narrow pent up valley with a good deal of irrigated land, it certainly has a most marked deleterious effect on the health of all save the natives living within its influence. A detachment of the Kazvin regiment, which consists of Turks, usually florid, and healthy looking, turned out a pale and fever-stricken band, completely divested of all traces of soldierly bearing. The natives also suffer from fever, but it has not the same debilitating effect on them.

Principal elevation in the plateau.

The principal elevations within the circuit of the plateau are the Koh Khisht in the north-west corner, which has an elevation above the valley of 1,500 feet, and an absolute height of 4,000 feet. It is formed, together with the whole of the plateau, in that direction of chalk filled with marine shells known as "Gryphæa." The strata form a bed of about 400 feet in thickness, and each in succession downwards increases in density, the lower attaining the appearance and texture of hard shelly limestone. The Koh Kara Tāva, above the Darband-i-Napht, supporting a portion of the northern cliffs, and rising high above them; and the Koh-i-Sar-i-Zar in the extreme east, The elevation of the two last cannot be less than 5,000 feet, and their formation does not differ from that of other portions of the plateau. On the south side of the stream is a remarkable rugged peak, rising about 1,000 feet above the valley, formed of red sandstone with a cap of white limestone of about 150 feet in thickness.

It is a curious fact and worthy of note that, notwithstanding the evidences of volcanic action in violent distortions of strata and other abnormal appearances of the formations of the plateau, there is nowhere any trace of volcanic rock.

The whole circuit of the cliffs enclosing the Kelat plateau cannot be less than from 50 to 60 miles. Their crests form a narrow ridge slightly serrated, but still of almost uniform height. The interior slope falls away in places in a sharp inaccessible incline, in others in long easy undulations reaching to the edges of the deep ravines, formed by the erosion of the soft rocks that seam the plateau in every direction.

Gates.

Besides the Darband-i-Arghoon Shah and the Darband-i-Napht, by which the stream enters and leaves the plateau, there are three other gates practicable for horsemen, "the Darband-i-Choobast, "the Darband-i-Kooshtani, and the Darband-i-Dehcha," at each of which a guard of 100 infantry is stationed as a precaution against surprise by the Turkomans. There are also about 100 points at which unincumbered and active footmen might ascend the cliffs, but most of these have been either scarped or securely built up. There are now nine foot-paths open, at each of which a guard of 15 men is stationed.

Vegetation.

Both the plateau and mountain slopes are entirely devoid of trees and shrubs, even the juniper, that is found so plentifully on the adjoining ranges, being absent. The surface of the ground is covered, however, with a thick growth of aromatic herbs and grass, affording excellent pasture.

Culturable tracts.

The culturable portions of the plateau are of considerable extent. There is first the valley, which has a rich alluvial soil, and in a belt of eight miles long by about a quarter broad, produces all the rice and fruit, silk and cotton, that is needed to feed and clothe the whole of the inhabitants. It has an elevation of 2,500 feet, and is the only irrigated tract within the inclosure of the plateau.

The more level parts of the highlands of the plateau have a fine light soil that returns crops of from 10 to 15 fold of wheat and barley, with very little labour on the part of the cultivators. Such lands lie at elevations ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 feet above the level of the valley. The area now under cultivation is small, and its produce does not exceed local requirements, but there is unlimited room for extension to meet the wants of any probable future increase of the population.

The crops, though dependent on rainfall and dews, never fail, save under exceptional visitation of drought, such as the whole country has lately suffered from. The fact is remarkable as the rain-fall and snow-fall on the north side of the mountains, though perhaps, as alleged by the natives, greater than on the south side, can hardly be sufficient to nourish vegetation, and the high plateau lands are entirely devoid of surface water and springs, owing, no doubt, to the lightness of the soil, the soft texture of the rocks below it, and the great depth to which the innumerable drainage lines have sunk.

Population.

The population of Kelat has been reduced by the famine and by previous misgovernment almost to the lowest ebb. Another season of drought would, I learnt, have swept away the highland villages, and have opened a path to the Turkomans into the heart

of the valley. For some time previous to the famine the hereditary chief had been deported to Mashad, and his place taken by the officer commanding the regiment stationed there, who, being inexperienced, failed not only to guard the Atak villages, but even to prevent frequent and destructive incursions across the almost impenetrable mountain barrier, by which large numbers of the inhabitants of the outlying villages were carried off. The ruins of a village, attacked by a large body of dismounted Turkomans, who leaving their horses outside ascended an unguarded path at night and completely destroyed and depopulated it, were pointed out as evidence; and impossible as such an enterprise appeared, there was little room left to doubt the fact.

At present the plateau contains only eight small villages—

Arghoon Shah and Gio Gōmbăz in the valley,

Giran (Girau), Khisht, Naphta, Sarizar, Kulazo, and Agtash on the highlands of the plateau.

The whole number about 280 houses, equivalent to 1,400 souls.

The people are chiefly Turks of the Jallayer and Beiyat tribes, with some few Arab and Koord families. They have been impoverished by hard seasons, but are tall, robust, and active. Those living in the valley are in no way affected by the insalubrious climate, and appear even finer men than the people of the highland villages. All are armed and inured to war by constant border warfare. When not demoralised by the apathy and neglect of their natural leaders, they are fully able to hold their own with the Turkomans, and some instances were cited of their combining to take the initiative in retaliatory enterprises.

Traces of former occupation.

There are no traces in Kelat of ancient occupation, even the mounds of fire-temples, so common elsewhere, are wanting. The most ancient ruins to be found are those of the "Imarat-i-Nadir," or Nadir's building. It was nevertheless no doubt a stronghold of Persian nationality. In the time of the earlier Tartar sovereigns it was occupied as a military position, and evidently deemed of great importance, as is shown by an inscription recording the completion of its fortifications by Arghoon Shah, the grandson of Halakoo, still visible at the gate named after him. Arghoon Shah is said to have fled to Kelat after his defeat in the west by his brother, Ahmed Khan. Timur Koorakan, or Tamerlane, took the place by stratagem. In later times Nadir Shah, who was born within sight of the rocky barriers of the fortress, fully recognized its importance and its true value, and put it to the only use that a position however strong, enclosed by many miles of impracticable mountainous country, and far distant from all main lines of communication and centres of population, could ever profitably be put to. According to local traditions, he made it the repository of the plunder brought back by his armies from Delhi, and there are traces sufficient to prove his intention to render it a habitable and permanent stronghold, and to show also his thorough knowledge of its requirements. On the crest of the cliffs, walls and watch-towers, wherever necessary to guard against

surprise, were repaired or built. A supply of pure water was provided for the garrison, as is shown by the remains of a subterranean and secret water-course, which was constructed to bring a stream into the valley from a distant spring—a fact in itself giving tolerably conclusive evidence of the unfitness of the water of the Kelat stream. The remains of the buildings erected by Nadir Shah show that he feared also the climate of the narrow valley; for all save a curious red sandstone tower, a most interesting relic, are to be found on one of the highest parts of the plateau on a bare waterless slope which could have had nothing to recommend it, but the purity of its atmosphere.

The efforts of the conqueror were evidently directed towards the provision of a secure stronghold for his descendants, for he himself is said to have had no intention to reside there—as in truth he had no need—and to have visited the place only once, and for a few days after the completion of the fine tower that bears his name.

After his death there appears to have been no struggle for the possession of the fortress; a fact that goes far to disprove the legend of buried treasures. It passed quietly into the hands of the present Khan's family, Turks of the Jallayer tribe, who held it as feudatories of Persia, but were enabled by the strength of the position to maintain a large share of independence. They were frequently in league with the Turkomans, and in conjunction with them threatened more than once the safety of the capital of the province.

The last of these rebel feudatories was Yalangtoosh Khan, who gave much trouble in the reign of Mahomed Shah, and was only reduced to submission by a large force under the "Salar," son of Asaf-oo-Dowlah, who with the aid of the chiefs of Koochan and Deregez, succeeded in marching round by the "Atak" and seizing the principal southern entrance.

Since that time a Persian force has always been maintained there, and this measure with the deportation of the chief family to Mashad, and subsequent depopulation due to oppression and famine, has completely broken the power of the hereditary chiefs, who may with safety be permitted—as the present chief has been—to return not only to their lands, but to the government of the district.

The maintenance of a royal garrison is in fact no longer necessary to overawe the population, but it could not now safely be withdrawn, for the natural defenders of the fortress are so reduced in numbers as to be unequal to its defence, and the occupation of so strong a position by the Turkomans would be a severe blow to the security, not only of the rich villages in the valleys of the southern slopes of the range, but of the town of Mashad itself. Its possession by Persia also alone enables her to maintain a foothold in the "Atak," and to push forward her settlements even feebly as she is now doing.

Kelat Atak.

The Kelat Atak, which, together with that of Deregez, was known in former days as "Khâwârān," was a very ancient centre

of population, and to judge from local accounts, of the extent of the ruins still visible, a very important one. It has been for centuries the battle ground of Persians, Koords, and Turkomans, and is still held by Persia, but feebly and timidly, and rather through the forbearance of her enemies than by force.

The circumstance of its present occupation is, however, a most important one, and might be turned to good account by Persia, for her position there with her tenure of Sarrukhs gives her constructive possession of the valley of the Tejen—a tract said to have the finest capabilities—and carries her border line nearly half way to the oasis of Merve.

Population of Atak.

The present settlements on the Atak occupy the same sites on the course of the streams flowing from the Kelat range as the ancient towns.

The villages now or very lately occupied are—

1. Khivabat Golingan -	On the Ab-i-Layum which joins the Abiverd stream. They were till lately occupied by Turkomans under Kelat. A raid by the rival Khan of Deregez drove them off. They are averse to return, though cultivation continues.
2. Tirmachi.	
3. Archingan - -	On the Ab-i-Archingan, occupied by settlers from Persia.
4. Afardeh or Abiverd -	On an eastern bank of the same stream; also lately occupied by Turkomans.
5. Châr-dēh Dōshākh -	On the Ab-i-Kelat, occupied by Turkomans.
6. Mihnă - -	On the Ab-i-Mihna, or Ab-i-Sar Rood, as it is also called, occupied by Turkomans.
7. Kărā Chāchā Mōpāk -	On the Ab-i-Khour, occupied by Turkomans.
8. Kârâtegān - -	Within the hill skirt, on the Ab-i-Mihna, occupied by Persian settlers.
9. Chāchā -	Above Kara Chacha, on the same stream, and within the hill skirt. One hundred families have been lately deported from Mashad and settled there.

The total population of these villages amounts to 300 houses, or about 1,500 souls. It consists of families of various tribes taken from Kelat and Mashad, with some families of Tekkah Turkomans induced to settled there by the Khan of Kelat.

Condition.

The land is fertile and yields a good return, and the supply of water is of course far in excess of present requirements. Rice and wheat are the only crops now raised, but the soil and climate are said to be admirably suited to the growth of cotton, and of

the mulberry for sericulture. The conditions of life are much the same as in the Atak of Deregez, and the new settlers from Mashad are restrained from flight only by force. The one measure that would ensure their security is the occupation by sufficient posts of the course of the Tejen, the pasture and water of which now enable their enemy to reach them with ease. The present embarrassments of the Turkomans of Merve afford also a fair opportunity.

Villages of outer Kelat.

The following are the Kelat villages outside the enclosure on the higher courses of the streams flowing to the Atak:—

1. Zoo - -	On the Ab-i-Mihna stream. The last high up on the main chain.
2. Yăngi Kala -	
3. Sar-i-Rood -	
4. Bāgh-Kand -	In the mountains south-east of Kelat.
5. Vărdeh - -	
6. Ak Kămr -	
7. Zărdi - -	West of Kelat on the Noorak and Archingan stream.
8. Chārm - -	
9. Sina - -	
10. Lāyun - -	
11. Khākistār -	East of Kelat.
12. Khour - -	

Of these one or two are mere hamlets. Bagh-kand, for instance, has but six houses, a number of its people having been carried off by Turkomans three years ago. The largest has only 50 houses.

Total population.

The total number of houses of these villages is calculated at 240. Thus the total population of the chiefship amounts to 4,100 souls:—

Kelat - - - -	1,400
Atak - - - -	1,500
Mountain villages - - -	1,200
Total - -	4,100

The proportion of adult males is probably one-fourth or more of the whole, for many of the recent settlers took no families with them.

Irregular forces.

The mounted force of Kelat for bordar defence numbers 200 men, principally natives. Such as I saw were scarcely so well armed as the men of the other border states, and were mounted on inferior horses. They are scattered in detachments at all the principal settlements in the Atak.

There are no footmen enrolled, but the whole male population is armed, and voluntarily, or rather as a necessity of their position, guard several of the more exposed points on the border, and are always ready to assemble at any threatened points.

Regular garrison.

The fortress is garrisoned by a detachment consisting usually of nearly a whole regiment of regular infantry from Mashad. The detachment is nominally relieved every three months, but usually a much longer time elapses, and in consequence very

severe losses are suffered from the unhealthiness of the climate in the lower altitudes. The death rate was said to be as high as 30 per hundred in the year; this is perhaps an exaggerated estimate, but the appearance of the men and the fact that two or three deaths took place during my short stay gave evidence in support of it.

The chief of Kelat, Bihbood Khan.

The present chief of Kelat, Bihbood Khan, is a man of about 50 years of age, intelligent and very well informed, having an uncommon taste for study both of the literature and history of his own country and of foreign languages. These tastes deprive an assumption of religious strictness of any taint of bigotry, and render him better disposed towards Europeans than men in his position in the country usually are. He is a son of Yalangtoosh Khan before mentioned, and has suffered for the frequent rebellions and invarible contumacy of his father by a lengthened exclusion from his patrimony and chiefship.

The Hissam-u-Sultanah first recognized his abilities and restored to him his father's lands, and the government of the impoverished and ruined chiefship, and he has since continued a devoted adherent of his first patron, though under the present *régime* the connection is calculated rather to injure his position and to render him an object of suspicion. He has incurred also the enmity of the Khan of Deregez, his neighbour, and rival; for the confidence reposed in him led to his being selected as the medium of communication between the provincial Government and the Turkomans of Merve, and entrusted with the task of resettling the "Atak," a preferment that would certainly, if the Prince's government had continued, have benefited him greatly to the prejudice of his rival.

With the Turkomans the Khan maintains the most close and friendly relations. The most direct route, though an impracticable one for military or commercial purposes to Merve, lies through his country, and all communications with the Merve chiefs pass through his hands.

During the Governor-Generalship of the Hissam-us-Sultanah, who had the wisdom to perceive that one of the first results of the Russian attack on Khiva would be the severance of the ties that bound the Turkomans to the Khanates, negotiations were carried on and overtures made to many of the leading Aksakals of Merve, to induce portions of the tribe to return and occupy, under the protection of Persia, their old seats on the Tejen and in the Atak. This measure would have created a bond between Persia and the Tekkah tribe that could not have failed to bear important fruit, and would at least have proved of value to Persia when the question of the possession of Merve should come to be discussed between her and Russia or any other power. If the removal of the Prince had not nipped the project in the bud, and it could have been carried out in its integrity, there can be no doubt that a large fraction of the Tekkah would have been enlisted under the banner of Persia, and a path opened for the extension of her influence over the whole tribe, an advantage that would have

secured her a sound basis for a claim to the sovereignty of the oasis.

Through the exertions of the Khan a commencement was made by the actual location of a number of Tekkah in the "Atak," and so far as it went the arrangement appears to have given satisfaction to both parties. There is no reason to doubt the probability of a successful prosecution of the scheme; but, as I have related elsewhere, a change of government and consequent change of policy ruined the one statesmanlike measure of border policy that has been projected since the Asaf-u-Dowlah's efforts were brought to a conclusion by his removal 30 years ago.

The Tekkah were given just cause for renewed hostility, and a feeble and hopeless attempt was made to settle portions of the "Atak" from the exhausted population of the adjoining Persian districts.

Of late, communication with Merve has been confined to the exchange of letters on trivial matters, and the Aksakals of Merve, who might by this time have been in attendance on the Shah, are looking to Afghanistan and Russia. The loss to Persia is immeasurable; the effect of her blunders as regards other powers interested, must depend greatly on their future action.

APPROXIMATE ESTIMATES OF THE POPULATION, RESOURCES &c., OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF PERSIA.

District.	Approximate Area in Square Miles.	Population in Round Numbers.	Surplus Grain Produce in Tons.	Enrolled Irregular Force.		Armed Peasantry.	Guns.
				Horse	Foot.		
Asterabad -	1,000	80,000	120 (rice)	400	1,322	12,000 to 14,000	1 field battery.
Shahrood (Bostam).	10,000	32,000	- - -	200	1,000	5,000 to 6,000	2 or 3 light guns.
Nardin -	- -	2,000	- - -	200	- -	300 to 400	2 light guns.
Bujnoord -	4,500	28,000	240 (wheat)	1,000	300	3,000 to 4,000	1 gun.
Koochan -	2,500	88,000	10,000 (wheat)	1,000	1,000	10,000	
Deregez -	1,000	18,000	- - -	800	- -	3,000	
Kelat -	- -	4,000	- - -	200	- -	1,000	2 guns.

SECTION III.

Goklan Turkomans.
Yamoot Turkomans.
Akhal Turkomans.

APPENDICES.

List of Clans of the Goklan.
" " Yamoot.
Leading men of the "
List of settlements of the Akhal.

Turkoman Tribes of North-east Frontier.

The Turkoman tribes of the north-east frontier of Persia are the Goklan, the Yamoot, and the Akhal section of Tekke. The Goklan, though the least powerful and important, first claim attention from the closeness of their connection with Persia.

The Goklan.—Forming the advance guard of the Turkoman hordes, the Goklan found their onward march arrested by the mountain barrier of the Alburz. Pressed on from behind by their savage kinsmen, and unable to make way against the physical difficulties of the country in their front, they settled down on the pastures at the base of the mountains, and have there maintained themselves for some centuries, gaining strength to resist the assaults of the Yamoot and Tekkah at the expense of a humiliating submission to Persia.

Save the Arsari of "Labab," of the Oxus, no Turkoman tribe appears to have so completely acquired a taste for agriculture and peaceful pursuits. Life in tents has not yet been abandoned, but the migration of each clan is restricted to the circle of cultivated spots and pastures owned by it.

In Khiva and Persia.

A portion of the tribe returned many years ago to the Khivan oasis, but still maintains a close connection with the Gurgan, and it is not unusual for a family or a number of families to migrate from one side of the desert to the other. Such emigrants have usually some political reason for moving, such as oppression by Persian or Khivan rulers. They are sure of a good reception from their kinsmen, and the only danger they run is in passage through the country of the hostile Yamoots. Of late, since the capture of Khiva, the stream of emigration has set towards Persia. The Eelkhanee of Bujnoord reckoned that the tribe on the Gurgan had within a year and a half received an accession of 400 to 500 families.

Persian Goklan.

The present locations of the Persian Goklan extend eastward from the Nowdeh stream, over the whole tract of country lying between the base of the Alburz and the Gurgan (a distance of about 16 miles), as far as the sources of that stream, and northward into the Attrek valley, a tract of country that has no equal in natural advantages in all Persia. The plain and valleys have all the verdure, the luxuriant natural forests, and the fertile soil of Mazanderan without its swamps and malaria.

On the left flank of the tribe and on its front across the Gurgan is the country of the Yamoot, whose "obahs" maintaining everywhere a neutral interval of eight to ten miles form an impenetrable and hostile barrier. On its right flank is the belt of uninhabited country, extending between the Persian border and the Atok, which is dominated on one side by the Koords of Bujnoord, and on the other by the Akhal Tekkah.

The "obahs," or the groups of tents, of the Goklan are scattered over the whole of the tract occupied by them, and there is but one permanent settlement, that of Sangar, the temporary residence of the deputy of the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord,

who represents the Persian Government administering justice and collecting tribute.

Sangar lies 12 to 15 miles east of Nowdeh, it consists of a stone fort and a number of tents and houses occupied by about 200 families of Goklan.

Numbers of the tribe.

The numbers of the Goklan of the Gurgan are variously computed at from 5,000 to 8,000 families, or 25,000 to 40,000 souls. The former is probably nearest the truth. About one-fifth may be reckoned as adult males. The whole tribe is said to have numbered 12,000 families at the time of the migration of a portion to Khiva.

Divisions.

It is divided into a number of "Taifas" and "Tiras," or divisions and sub-divisions, the names of which noted on the appended lists were given me at Bujnoord by their Ex-Deputy Governor and by other authorities. They differ slightly from those in the various published accounts of the tribe.

Tribute.

The number of families paying tribute, that is coming under separate assessment, known as Daftaris, is 2,000, and the amount of the tribute collected 7,000 tomans. Of this 6,000 is the share of the Persian Government and is paid into the Asterabad treasury, and 1,000 remains in the hands of the Eelkhanee. About 1,000 tomans in excess of this is also taken to pay for collection.

The mounted force of the Goklan is immensely inferior to that of the other Turkoman tribes on the Persian border, both in point of numbers and efficiency. Only one clan, the Kirik, is said to have a good breed of horses, and efficient and well armed riders. About 300 men of the Kirik can turn out on emergency, and they form the best portion of the body of 600 horse that the Goklan are bound to maintain for the defence of the Persian border. The other clans of the Goklans have few horses, are ill armed, and have, it is said, lost to a great extent the warlike spirit of their ancestors.

From 1,000 to 2,000 footmen, armed with matchlocks, can be collected at Sangar with a few days' notice. About that number accompanied Jafir Gooli Khan Eelkhanee, Governor of Asterabad, to the attack of Kara Kalla.

Relations with Persia.

The connection of the Goklan with Persia has, there can be little doubt, saved them from extinction, for their enemies, the Yamoot and Tekkah, are powerful and inveterate. Their enmity appears never to have flagged. Alliances have been formed between Tekkah and Yamoot, but never between the Goklan and either of these tribes. A heavy price has, however, been exacted, and a heavy burden of oppression and humiliation imposed. The Goklan have borne a full share of the misfortunes and misrule under which Persia has been sinking during the last 200 years, and their feelings towards their rulers are proportionably hostile. Though now relieved of the obligation to maintain a contingent of horsemen at the capital, and not heavily taxed, and within the last few years governed without much oppression, the sense of former wrongs is powerful, and from what I was able to hear of them, I should judge that they have no sentiment of loyalty

towards the present dynasty, and would welcome a change of rule from whatever quarter it might come.

The titular governor of the district is the governor of Asterabad, whose jurisdiction nominally extends up to the Bujnoord villages on the Attrek, and in the days when the chiefs of Bujnoord were but half trusted, its affairs were directly managed from Asterabad.

The Goklan, though giving a regular contingent and performing regular military service, had then more of independence than in the present day, for they could be less readily coerced, and their loyalty was of more importance. In the time of the two last Eelkhanees, Jafir Gooli Khan and Hyder Gooli Khan, both of whom enjoyed the full confidence of the Shah, and held also the government of Asterabad, a change took place. It was found that the chief of Bujnoord, with his fine body of horsemen, could keep a tighter hand on the tribe than the officials of Astrabad, who could only move an inefficient and unwieldy force of infantry and guns, stationed at a great distance from the settlements. The collection of tribute and the coercion of refractory subjects was therefore entrusted to the chief of Bujnoord, while the power to summon, to punish, and to extort remained in the hands of the governors of Asterabad, usually men of much influence. The evils of this dual government are great, and the complete helplessness of the tribe has alone prevented rebellion. During the last two or three years, however, a thoroughly good understanding between the two local authorities has alleviated much of the hardship of the system, and so long as this continues complaints will not be heard.

With the Yamoot and the Akhal, who enclose them on the west, north, and north-west, the Goklan are at constant feud. Their "obahs" are liable to attack at all times, and they have themselves little power of resistance. They depend when hard pressed for assistance on Bujnoord, and more especially in reference to the position of Kari-Kala, the occupation of which by the Yamoot or Akhal obliges them to forsake the fine pastures of the Upper Attrek.

Communication with the Russian authorities on the Caspian.

Their position leaves the Goklan almost entirely dependent on Persia, and they are cut off from direct communication with the Russians on the Caspian by their Yamoot enemies, but there has nevertheless been friendly intercourse and the tribe is said to be better disposed towards Russia than any other branch of the Turkomans, a circumstance perhaps sufficiently accounted for by its peculiar position. They were visited in 1859 by a party of Russian officers who remained some time in their country, and a few of their chief men were on friendly terms with the Russian Consul at Asterabad.

In 1870 Markosoff's column operating against the Akhal Tekke was joined by a number of Goklan horsemen, who were well paid for their services in the plundered goods of the Akhal, and in 1872 the Chekishlar-Khivan column obtained from them some camels.

These facts are unmistakable evidence of good-will, and as such worthy of note. So long, however, as her frontier line remains north of the Attrek, the disposition of the Goklan towards Russia is a matter of comparatively of little importance.

The Yamoot.—The Yamoot form at present perhaps the most important of the Turkoman tribes. They are numerous and powerful, and in direct contact with Russia along the whole line of the East Caspian frontier from Khiva to Mangishlak, Balkhan, and Attrek. In the same manner as the Goklan the tribe is divided into two bodies, one dependent on the Gurgan and Attrek tract, the other on the Kivan oasis. Of the condition of the latter little is known on the Persian border. A portion of these, political fugitives, have lately joined their kinsmen located in the south. Another portion has, it is said, submitted to the influence of Russia and are assessed with a nominal tribute; while the remainder continue obstinately to oppose the progress of subjugation, and by closing roads and capturing convoys to prepare for themselves a not unjust retribution. Their connexion with the "Khanate" appears to be entirely severed, and they will not readily forgive the pusillanimous submission of the Khivans and their treacherous desertion of them. Yamoots of Khiva.

As described to me, their attitude towards Russia is briefly one of extreme hostility unnerved by a forecast of inevitable submission and subjection. For some years to come there can be no doubt that any banner hostile to Russia would be welcomed by them, but sooner or later, as they themselves admit regretfully, they must succumb to the overwhelming influences assailing them.

The movements and condition of the Yamoots of the Attrek, Gurgan, and Balkhan, who may be termed the Persian Yamoots, are better known, but not less irregular and diverse. The distinctive organisation of the tribe is gradually dissolving under the influence of new interests, new impulses, and new aspirations, while the different fractions into which it has parted are swayed constantly by the most powerful and conflicting emotions. Persian Yamoots.

Under such conditions the command at any time of timely and sufficient knowledge of the intentions and disposition of the tribe or of a majority, can only be secured by the closest and most unremitting attention, or in other words, information regarding the disposition manifested at any particular time by a majority would afford a most unsafe basis on which to found general conclusions.

An insight into the present situation will, however, leave the way clear to an understanding of future events and future changes.

The tract of country now occupied by the Persian Yamoots extends south from the Balkhan between the Caspian and the mountains of Khorassan as far as the line of the Gurgan stream. The Gurgan is crossed by them west of the Nowdeh stream and of the Gunbaz-i-Kaoos, and they hold the whole tract south of the river as far as the edge of the forest, or to within three or

four miles of the mountains. Their western limit is opposite the little fort of Mulla-Kalla, across the Kara-Soo.

The main physical features of this tract have been already noted in some detail, and are also well known through numerous published accounts. It is separated by diversity of natural feature into three distinct sections, the northern of which, the Balkhan country, is occupied merely temporarily as a "Yielak," or summer pasture of a portion of the tribe, the "Charwars" or pure nomads from the Attrek; the central, a zone of desert extending from the old bed of the Oxus nearly to the Attrek, affords pasturage at a few points only in the spring; and the southern, the Attrek-Gurgan country, which is the permanent location of a large portion of the tribe and the head-quarters of the whole.

It is of much importance to note the distribution of the tribe over this last section.

Attrek-Gurgan tract.

The extent of country is considerable. Its greatest width from the Attrek, south, to Finderisk, is about 46 miles. Its greatest length from the mouth of the Kara-Soo to the "Chat," the junction of the two main streams of the Attrek, 90 miles.

The country on both banks of the Attrek is fertile and has fine pastures, but comparatively little permanent cultivation. There is but one "obah" of the "Choomoors," the cultivating class of Yamoots, a collection of various divisions of the tribe located at Attrek on a spot about 12 miles from the sea, known as Gooi, and having a very bad reputation as robbers and pirates. They are at enmity with and in a manner outlaws among their own people. The "Charwars," or pure nomads, make the banks of the Attrek their winter quarters, and such cultivation as they trouble themselves with is carried on there.

The country between the Attrek and the Gurgan is exceedingly fertile, and increases in fertility as it approaches the latter stream. It is permanently occupied by the "Choomoor" class, and is also the refuge of many of the "Choomoors" escaping from the malaria and great heat of the moist lands across the Gurgan. In winter large numbers of the "Charwars" also find pasturage for their flocks there. The lands south of the Gurgan are very fertile and much frequented in winter, but in summer the mass even of the "Choomoor" retire northwards.

The country along the shore of the Caspian is for the most part sandy and sterile, but is thickly peopled in winter. The principal "obahs" lie at the mouths of the two streams.

Principal settlements.

The following is a list of some of the principal points at which portions of the tribe may always be found with due regard to seasons:—

Kara-Soo.—At the mouth of that stream. The winter quarters only of various sections of the Ata Bai. In summer it is deserted.

Kara Sangar.—Two miles north, winter quarters. Permanently occupied by Tumaj, of Jafir Bai, chiefly.

Khawaja Nafas.—On the southern branch of the Gurgan, seven or eight miles from Kara-Soo. In winter occupied by

a collection of various sections from the interior, and a small trading port. In summer deserted.

Gomushtuppa.—On the northern branch, three or four miles north of Khwaja Nafas, occupied in winter by 2,000 tents of Oghurjally, Koor,, Kalta, and other sections of Jafir Bai. A trading port. In summer deserted.

Hassan Kooli.—On the north shore of the Attrek estuary. Permanently occupied. In summer the people of Khoja Nafas and Gomushtuppa retire there, and the number of tents amounts to 2,000. The surrounding country is sandy and barren. Little is grown save melons of fine quality. Sweet water can only be procured two or three miles up the river, whence it is brought in boats and on camels. The Ogharjally are found here in large numbers, and with them many merchants, handicraftmen, and sailors.

Chikishlar.—Six or eight miles north-west. Occupied in summer by "obahs" from the Gurgan mouths numbering about 100 tents. The soil is sandy, and good water is obtained from wells.

Chalakan.—The settlement of Chalakan, the only spot permanently occupied by the Yamoot in the Balkhan tract may be mentioned here. It lies, by Turkoman computation, 28 fursakhs by sea from Hassan Kooli. There are three points on the strip of coast at which boats may touch, Kara Dashli, 8 fursakhs; Kiska-Soo, 7 fursakhs, Oozoon-Soo, 3 fursakhs. From Chalakan to Krasnovodsk 2 fursakhs. The island has a village estimated by the Yamoots at 1,000 tents, but probably not exceeding half that number.

Attrek.—Before mentioned.

Altan Tukhmak.—Two old forts on mounds between the rivers about two miles from the sea. Permanent settlement of the Jafir Bai.

Kara Sofi.—So called from an old tomb. Inland two miles from Gamushtuppa and from the coast. A Jafir Bai settlement.

Kizlar.—On the Gurgan.

Kirnyarukh.—On the Gurgan.

Ak-Kalla.—About five miles north from Astrabad. In winter covered with camps.

Karawal-tuppa.—Near the Goklan border, about 60 miles east from Astrabad.

It will be seen from the above that nearly the whole of the Persian Yamoots are to be found in winter between the Attrek and Gurgan on the Persian border south of the Gurgan, and on the sea coast south of the Attrek estuary, and that the only considerable settlements on the north of the estuary are those of Hassan Kooli and Chikishlar.

Also, that in summer even, a large proportion of the tribe, that is, the whole of the "Choomoors," though retiring from the immediate vicinity of the Persian border villages remain south of the Attrek. Of the purely nomadic section even, a portion is to be found permanently on the Persian side of the river, for they ascend in summer into the valleys of the Upper Attrek,

where they remain if unmolested, or able to sustain the attacks of the Akhal Turkomans and the Koord guardians of the Goklan border. The mass of the nomads retire in summer on to the Turkoman bank of the Attrek, and north towards the Balkhan, where they come directly under the influence of Russia.

Divisions.

The majority of the Yamoots belong to two great divisions, named from their progenitors, Chooni and Sharaf, terms which are now in common usage synonymous with Ata Bai and Jafir Bai, the principal and best known divisions.

The remainder of the tribe are of Yamoot origin, but cannot claim descent from Chooni and Sharaf, and consequently hold a somewhat inferior position in its traditional history, though in other respects equal, and counting many important and powerful sections. Their clans are entered on the rolls of either the Jafir Bai, or Ata Bai, probably through the connexion or relationship of their ancestors with the patriarchs of those divisions.

The appended lists (———) give the names of the best known fractions of the tribe, but there are, no doubt, many others. A complete list could probably only be obtained from some prominent priest or bard.

Numbers.

Computations of the numbers of the tribe are very various. The whole are usually stated in round numbers at 60,000 families, and the number of the southern or Persian branch at 20,000. The former is probably exaggerated and should be reduced, as Vambéry has reduced it in his list to 40,000. The latter figure, looking at the extent of country occupied, is probably near the truth, and may stand with a deduction of one-fourth. Leaving 15,000 tents or 75,000 souls, a few hundred more than the aggregate of the numbers of families of the various fractions of the tribe represented among the Southern Yamoots, which were obtained from various sources.

Division by occupations.

The minute tribal sub-divisions given above do not indicate, in any degree, the actual constitution of the tribe, and cannot be taken as an index of the relative size or importance of the different fractions. They are, in fact, of little real importance. Every member of each tribe knows well the name of his particular "Tira" or section, and its relation to the main body of the tribe, but his movements appear to be little affected thereby. "Obahs" or camps of families of the same "Tira" may be found on many different and widely separated pastures or arable tracts, and "obahs" of various sections on the same ground.

To their neighbours, even those well acquainted with them, they are Jafir Bai and Ata Bai, any further knowledge being usually confined to that of their occupation.

It is here that a real and important distinction begins.

A portion of the tribe, retaining the habits of their ancestors, continue in purely nomadic pursuits; another portion have taken to cultivation for subsistence, and a third to trade.

Charwars.

The first, the "Charwars," are said to number now rather less than half the southern branch, or about 6,000 families. They have numerous horses, camels, and flocks, and the necessity of

moving frequently and of spreading themselves over a large extent of country for the sake of pasturage, retains them on the northern tract. They furnish the whole of the plundering bands, from which the Perian borderers and the Goklan suffer, and are the most formidable and important as regards their military capacities.

The second portion, the "Choomoors," continue to live in tents and to move, though in a restricted circuit, but devote themselves almost entirely to agriculture. They have horses and arms, and resist vigorously any assaults that may be made on their quasi-independence by Persia, but are still attached to the soil, and in process of conversion from the nomadic to the settled state. Choomoors.

Both "Charwars" and "Choomoors" are of all the divisions of the tribe. The change from the one class to the other appears to be a question of means or of accident, and not of connexion with any particular division. Most of the fractions or divisions of the tribe thus count a number of "Choomoors," in some the majority are of that class, and in a few the whole. Any difference with the Persian authorities may change the condition of a family or of a whole "obah," causing them to leave their lands and join the nomadic and plundering class.

The number of the "Choomoors" is said to exceed that of the "Charwars," they may therefore be safely set down at 8,000 tents.

The third, the trading portion of the tribe, number not more than 1,000 tents, and is composed almost entirely of the Ogurjali the only clan that devotes itself entirely to commerce. The men of this clan disclaim a common origin with the plundering Yamoot, and have placed themselves entirely at the disposal of Persia. They are consequently despised and maltreated by their kinsmen. Their goods are frequently plundered, and their wives and daughters forcibly abducted, a thing unknown among other Turkomans. Ogurjali.

The fact that the Persian Yamoots are thus divided by diversity of occupation, and consequent diversity of interests, is worthy of note, being of much political importance. Even the strong ties of kindred may ultimately give way to the opposing impulses of self-interest, and the tribe be found ranged under two different banners. The "Charwars" must almost of necessity submit themselves to the power holding the pastures of the Balkhan, and the "Choomoors" and traders to the power owning the culturable lands of the Attrek and Gurgan and the sea coast.

The Yamoot, in common with the other Turkoman tribes, have no organized and constituted authority, no council of elders, such as guides the movements of the most barbarous of the tribes of Afghanistan. Each "obah" moves at will in a course, the limits of which are prescribed only by immemorial usage. There is no central authority that could be depended upon to lead the tribe or to bind it to any engagement. The force of any strong feeling aroused by extraordinary events might for a time Constitution of tribe.

so affect public opinion as to cause the whole to move in unison, but the union would be unreliable, and its continuance perhaps impossible.

The opinions of those best acquainted with the condition and constitution of the tribe, with whom I had opportunities of conversing, appeared to be unanimous as to the extreme difficulties of dealing with and controlling or influencing the disposition and movements of the tribe. Force, and force only was believed to be the argument understood and likely to be of any avail. The leading men of the tribe might be bought or cajoled into adopting a particular line of conduct, or favouring a particular cause, and might by their influence lead a majority of the tribe, but it was just as probable that after all devices had been exhausted they would be overruled and set aside by an adverse current of public opinion, impelled by a general adherence to obscure traditional usages or antipathies.

The influence of religion was held to be very small, though individuals of the religious class have much influence, and are revered and listened to in all ordinary affairs.

The application of force has, however, for obvious reasons, which I propose to revert to when noting my observations regarding the actual relations of the tribe with the powers directly interested in it, not recommended itself. A conciliatory policy has been adopted. In pursuance of this policy a number of men have been singled out and employed, and thus brought permanently into notice. The names of these men are noted in the annexed list (———) together with some others whose names were mentioned as having influence with portions of the tribe. They form at present the aristocracy, or the real leaders of the tribe though their authority is very limited.

Armed force.

The principal force of the tribe is, as might be expected, its cavalry. The number of mounted men that might be collected at a favourable season, that is in winter, is reckoned at 5,000, and this is probably not an exaggerated estimate. The men are said to be better armed than the Tekkah of the Mashad border, and their horses are powerful, active, and full of endurance. A large number of footmen might also be collected, for the adult male population cannot be reckoned at less than from 12,000 to 14,000, but their arms would certainly be inferior. The policy of both the Russian and Persian Government causes them to place a strict embargo on the import of arms into the Turkoman country, and as a consequence the tribes are almost wholly dependent on their own manufactures or on the markets of Khiva and Bokhara.

External politics of the tribe.

The neighbours of the Persian Yamoots are now Russia and Persia on the west, and the Goklan and the Tekkah of Akhal on the east.

Their relations with the former will be better dealt with as a separate question affecting wider interests than that of the tribe.

With both their eastern neighbours they are at almost constant feud. The Goklan are inferior to them in numbers and "morale,"

and are dependent on Persian aid. The Akhal are superior, being more united and having the advantage of a position most difficult to assail. The line of their settlements is, in fact, penetrable at a few points only. Alliances of the Yamoot and Akhal against Persia, their common enemy, were in former days not unfrequent, but the connection of the latter with Russia, and the aid they have given to Russian troops, has embittered the traditional animosities that form a barrier between the two tribes. The Akhal affect to regard the Yamoot as "Kafirs," or unbelievers, whose property or wives are their lawful prey, and the Yamoot are not slow to retaliate by any means in their power. The fact that a Russian expedition is to be aimed at the Akhal is sufficient to secure their neutrality or active assistance.

The Akhal who might otherwise remain isolated, and beyond the sphere of Russian operations for some indefinite time longer, are thus brought into direct collision with Russia. Whatever may be the relations of the Yamoot themselves at the time with the Russian authorities, every attack on their camps is represented as an insult to the Russian flag, and as such may be made a justification of further advances eastward. A union might possibly be brought about between the two tribes, but only under the pressure of most extraordinary events. In the meantime the existing feud continues a source of danger to the peace of the steppe, if not to far more important interests.

The Akhal Tekkah.—The original settlement of the Akhal Tekkah on the borders of Persia was contemporaneous with that of the Merve Tekkah, of whom they are an integral portion. The whole tribe was brought from the "Labab" of the Oxus, and planted in their present seats by Nadir Shah. The Akhal portion have since maintained themselves successfully in spite of frequent attempts to subdue or to dislodge them, and in spite of the retirement of the main body to Merve. Their success has been due to their own warlike qualities aided by the weakness of Persia, the feuds of rival border chiefs, and their disaffection and treachery.

The name "Akhal" applied to this tribe, is borrowed from one of their chief "obahs," near which are the ruins of a large Persian town and mounds of fire temples. It served in former days to distinguish them from the Tekkah settled on the Tejen, and in the Kelat "Atak."

The country occupied by the "Akhal" has been described in a previous report. It consists of a strip of fertile land, varying from two or three to sixteen miles in width, and extending from Kyzil Arvat, about 130 miles west, south-west from Balkhan Bay to Gawars, the most easterly settlement, a distance of about 160 miles. It is plentifully watered at intervals by small streams, flowing from the northern face of Alburz. Between the lines of the streams the desert stretches up to within a few miles of the base of the mountains.

The ruins of several towns, said to cover large areas, are to be found on the banks of the larger streams at Karez, Akhal,

Ishkabad, Annau, and Nissa. The ruins at the last point, which is about 50 miles north-west from Bujnoord, are said to be the most remarkable. The town is said to have been the centre of a district, known as "Sham-i-Koochak," or Little Syria, presumably from its beauty and fertility. Both the mountains and hill skirts are devoid of trees, but afford fine pasturage.

The Turkoman "obahs" lie scattered along the base of the hills wherever there is sufficient water and pasturage, and have a more permanent character than the settlements of the other tribes, there being in fact little room between the mountains and the desert for migration. Each "obah" consists of a number of tents pitched within reach of a stone enclosure that serves as a place of refuge from the sudden attacks of their Koord neighbours, to which the nomads are constantly liable.

The position of the Akhal "Atak" is exceedingly strong. To the north it is protected by an almost waterless desert, the shortest line across which is twelve days' march for a caravan, and is practicable only for small numbers. South of it extends a mass of lofty mountains, with few passes practicable even for mule carriage. East 130 miles of barren desert intervene between it and the sea.

It is most easily assailable for a properly equipped force, large enough to occupy the country and subdue the tribe, from the south-west up the valley of the northern tributary of the Attrek, a distance from the sea to the nearest "obah" of about 170 miles. The last 50 miles of this route lie through a hilly country, with one pass probably not less than 5,000 feet above the sea.

From the south-east also a large force following the course of the Tejen might enter the country without meeting with any serious difficulties.

The attacks of the Persians have always been made from Deregez and Koochan as a base, but the forces employed were ill-equipped, and the expeditions partook always of the nature of a surprise, and failed to make any serious impression, the Turkómans finding an asylum for their cattle and families in the desert, while they waited till difficulties of supply and communication forced the Persians to retreat.

The fertile soil and good water supply of the "Atak" enable the Turkomans to raise all the grain necessary for their own consumption, and a considerable quantity of cotton, rice, and silk. They have no ready market for surplus produce, and require little beyond that which their own fields and looms supply them with. Having fine pastures and excellent blood, their attention is most devoted to horse-breeding, and in local estimation the produce of their studs is unequalled. Their horses are large and powerful, and usually of finer shape than those of the other tribes.

The number of tents or families of the Akhal are variously computed, some estimates giving as high as 20,000. A comparison of Persian and Turkoman estimates, the first being usually

depreciatory, the latter always exaggerated, gives an average of about 8,000 tents or 40,000 souls, which is probably very near the truth. One-fifth of this number must be adult males. The whole are more or less well armed, and about 4,000 are mounted, equipped, and constantly ready for distant forays or for defence of their homes. About 2,000 more, it was estimated, might on emergency be mounted on mares and stout horses of inferior breed to those employed for offensive expeditions.

There are also from 2,000 to 3,000 footmen, armed with matchlocks, and accustomed to warfare in the mountains, who have more than once given full employment to the Persian forces in Deregez, Koochan, and Bujnoord. The horsemen of the tribe, when engaged in attacks on the neighbouring mountain villages, are usually aided by a number of these matchlockmen, who are employed in holding passes and attacking posts unassailable by cavalry.

The principal settlements of the "Akhal" are at Akhal, a permanent camp of 500 tents, often increased to 1,000 of various sections; Goomballi, 1,000 tents; Karez, occupied only temporarily; Harrik Kala, Ishkabad, and Annau.

Annexed is a list, I believe complete, of the different "obahs" from Kyzil Arwat to Gawars. They vary much in size, some numbering but 20 tents, others as many as 2,000. In addition to these there are a few small camps, not permanent, but moving where pasture is to be found at different seasons.

The whole of the divisions of the Tekke are represented among the Akhal save the Mujawir and Topal sections of the Otamish. The closest possible connection is maintained between the two branches. Many of the leading men having two "alachiks" and establishments, one with the branch of their clan at Merve, the other with the branch at Akhal.

Kousheed Khan is tacitly regarded as the leader of the whole tribe, but a position exactly analogous to his is held by Nur Verdi Khan, an "Aksakal" of the Yusuf section among the Akhals. The authority of Nur Verdi Khan is as ill-defined as that of the Merve leader, but he is credited with the possession of an extensive influence. All important negotiations with the Persians or the Koord chiefs are carried on through him, and his pledge is deemed by the latter sufficient guarantee of the good faith of the whole tribe.

The following are men of acknowledged influence, or who have distinguished themselves of late by their dealings with the Russians or the Persians:—

Sofi Khan, of Kyzil Arwat, the leader of the body of 1,000 Tekkah horse that crossed the desert to oppose Lamakin's column in 1873. He has since made his peace with the Russians and has been well received at Krasnovodsk, whence he has lately returned charged with the task of procuring the release of the Yamoot prisoners. It is denied that he has any influence with the tribe or even with his own section.

Khan Mahomed Iwaz Khan Nur Ali accompanied Sofi Khan to Krasnovodsk, but returned speedily, dissatisfied it is said with the reception.

Pashi Khan, of Ishkabad, an influential Aksakal, before mentioned as agent of the Khan of Deregez.

Fowlad Khan, of Kibchak, mentioned as agent of the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord.

Kurban Murad Ishan, Dookma, Sirdar, Aksakal, leading men of the large obahs, usually encamped at Karez or in the vicinity.

Oraz Mahomed Khan, of the Karadja section, the leading Aksakal of two or three "obahs" aggregating 2,000 tents. Has also an establishment at Merve and some influence there.

The connection of Persia with the Akhal is maintained almost entirely through the Koord chiefs of the border. Her policy, if it can be so called towards them, has of late years been one of entire neutrality. She has undertaken no offensive operations against them, and entered into no friendly negotiations. A step towards a closer connection was taken by the Turkomans, when Nur Verdi Khan applied for an asylum for the families of the tribe at the time of Colonel Markosoff's invasion of the "Atok;" but he was met by a refusal, and the Turkomans were given to understand that the Russians were acting as allies of the Persians. The border chiefs maintain their customary relations at feud now with one section, now with another, raiding and plundering wherever possible, and conciliating by presents where anything is to be gained thereby.

The chiefs in direct connection with the Akhal, and through whom the Persian Government keeps itself informed of the movements and disposition of the tribe, are the Khan of Deregez, the Khan of Koochan, and the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord. With the former they have been for some time on good terms. The Khan receives the fullest information, and his messengers are free to come and go. At the same time he is not free from liability to attack, and cannot for a moment relax the vigilance of the watch maintained on his borders. A good illustration of the peculiar relations, subsisting between the parties, is afforded by the following incident. Early in the spring of last year the Khan received intimation that he would be attacked shortly by a large force from Merve. Preparations were made by withdrawing the population of the smaller hamlets, and removing all their cattle and property to the three large walled villages. Notice was sent to Mashad and aid demanded from Koochan. In the meantime as the assailants approached, news of their numbers, the names of the leaders, and the probable point of attack reached the Khan daily. At the very hour that he had been apprised the attack would be made, a body of 3,000 Merve and Akhal horse passed the "Atok" villages, and poured through the pass into the open valley. They remained masters of all outside the village walls for a few hours, when finding nothing worth putting on the backs of their spare horses, they commenced an irregular and careless retreat. While still defiling through the pass into the "Atok,"

a vigorous attack made on their rear by 1,000 horsemen, under the Khans of Koochan and Deregez, threw the whole body into flight, and a running fight maintained for 16 or 18 miles, resulted in the capture of 40 Turkoman horses and the slaughter of ten or a dozen of their riders, whose heads were borne back in triumph, a sufficient advantage to be reckoned in border estimation a complete victory. A similar invasion four years previously, when the safety of the district was in different hands, had a far less fortunate issue. The enemy burst without warning into the valley, swept up the population and the cattle of the hamlets on the plain, forced the defences of one of the largest villages, and retired with a large booty and 3,000 prisoners, chiefly women and children.

The nearest "obahs" of the Akhal pay tribute to the Khan for immunity from attack, and he could if necessary raise a few horsemen among them. On his part the Khan employs his force chiefly in the defence of the border, seldom raiding save in retaliation; and he lies under grave suspicion of giving information to the Turkomans of intended forays of his Koord neighbours. Such relations, though they can hardly be called friendly, place the Khan in a position that would ensure at least his ability to bring his government into friendly negotiations with the tribe.

The Khan or Elkhanee of the Zaferanloo is on somewhat different terms with the Akhal. They are, from the nature of his country and his superior force, less able to retaliate, and consequently more at his mercy. He has his friends among them and receives good information, but the enmity between the Koords and the Turkomans is bitter, and he would probably be less willingly listened to as a negotiator than his neighbour of Deregez.

With the Eelkhanee of Bujnoord the Akhal were up to a late date on good terms. The occupation of Kara-Kala by the Goklan has removed one constant source of annoyance, and the fact that the Yamoots of the Upper Attrek are at feud with the Koords serves as a slight additional incentive to mutual goodwill.

The position of the Eelkhanee on the flanks of the three tribes, the Goklan, the Yamoot, and the Akhal, gives him a far more intensive influence than the chief of the Koochan can command, for he is usually able to bring one or other of them to act in concert with him. In relation to the Akhal in fact he enjoys the advantages of both the Koochan and Deregez Khans. He has the power and influence to make himself respected, and is yet at such a distance that collisions cannot easily occur unsought. He is therefore, perhaps, apart from his personal character, best fitted to act as a mediator or negotiator between the Akhal and the Persian Government.

With their Yamoot neighbours the Akhal are at constant feud, and it is by their attacks on the Yamoot "Charwars" that they have been brought into contact with Russia. The subject of their relations with that power will be better dealt with in

connection with the relations of the Yamoot with Russia and Persia.

Divisions of the Goklan.—After comparison of four different lists of the divisions of this tribe given by the very best authorities, so many discrepancies were apparent that the construction of a complete and symmetrical list appeared impossible. All the authorities differed in details and none could be despised. The truth is that no person, save perhaps a popular "Ishan" (Priest) or "Bakhshi" (minstrel) who travels much among the tents of his people, could give a correct list of their minutest divisions, the difficulty being to distinguish between the "Taifa" and the "Tira," the divisions and the subdivisions. This is clearly evidenced by the nature of the discrepancies. I will give, therefore, first a list of the principal divisions and subdivisions, about which there can be no doubt, with notes of their locations and numbers, and then a list of clans which are either divisions or subdivisions.

Division.	Subdivision.	Number of Tents.	Locality.
1. Yoonghak -	Yoonghak - -	150	Near the Gumbaz-i-Kaoos and to the east of it.
	Gooti - -	100	
2. Chakir (Chakir Beg Dilli).	Chakir - -	100	East of the Gumbaz-i-Kaoos towards Gurgan.
	Aman Khwaja -	30	
	Pank - -	30	
	Baran - -	40	
	Karawul - -	60	
	Koosa - -		
	Karashmal - -	50	
	Bainal - -	70	
	Kulkara - -	30	
3. Kyrik - -	Kyrik - -	100	On the upper course of the Gurgan.
	Karakuzi - -	150	
	Khwaja Verdi Kyrik		
	Kakir Sheikh -		
	Gokcha Kyrik -	100	
4. Gharib Ali Khan	Gharib Ali Khan -	300	Near the mouth of the Sari Soo, a brackish stream joining the Gurgan from the north, two fursakhs above the Gurgan "olang" or pasture. The Kyzil Allan passes near this. The Arab is divided into two Tiras camping near Khalid Paighambar, a tomb north of Gurgan.
	Arab - -		
	Sikirsagi - -		
5. Kayi - -	Kayi - -	300	Near the Dihana or Pass of Gurgan.
	Bokuja - -		
	Dari - -		
	Tamak - -		

Other Divisions or Subdivisions of the Goklan.

Number and Name.	Number of Tents.	Locality.
1. Ak Shor	80	East of the Gumbaz-i-Kaoos and near the mountains adjoining the Yoonghak "obahs." Kooshchi and Khar said to be also Tiras of Yoonghak.
2. Kara Shor	150	
3. Kooshchi	100	
4. Khar	50	
5. Ay Darvesh	100	Adjoining the Chakir to the east.
6. Gokcha	100	
7. Bayindar	200	On the Gurgan pasture.
8. Irkakli	250	Holding the pass of Gurgan in a very strong and secure position.
9. Sangreek	-	Said to be Tira of Yoonghak.
10. Kara Balkhan.		
11. Ata	-	Syuds, descendants of the third Caliph Oosman.
12. Makhdoom	-	
13. Damghar	-	Syuds, descendants from Abubekr.
14. Sheikh	-	
15. Khwaja	-	Syuds, descendants from Ali, the fourth Caliph (according to the Sunni belief).
16. Ajam.		
17. Dehla.		
18. Mulla.		
19. Allayos.		
20. Amanjik.		
21. Peshej.		
22. Haji Beg.		
23. Yasaglik.		
24. Ata Nyaz Khan.		

Leading Men of the Persian Yamoots.

Name.	Taifa or Tirah.	Remarks.
Killich Khan	Koor	Principal Agent of the Government of Asterabad with the Yamoot, and acknowledged head of all the Jafir Bai tribes subject to Persia.
Nur Geldij Khan	Kalta	Agent of the Russian Government, under the naval authorities, for collection of dues from Turkoman boats trading to Cheleken and other places. These dues have lately been remitted save a small amount, the right to take which has been granted to him. He has in addition a grant of 16 tomans = Rupees 64 per mensem.
Geldi Khan	Koor	Also in Russian pay as a Turkoman Agent.
Eel Geldi Khan	Do.	Son of Geldi Khan, Agent of Russian Government under the military authorities, said to be highly paid and much trusted.
Abba Bai	Tumaj	An influential man, who has done the Russians some service. He is said to have furnished Markosoff with 18,000 camels. After the close of the campaign he was taken to Baku and received a present and the sum of Rupees 20,000 for distribution to his tribe.
Burjagh	Kalta	Son of Charkas, a chief who with other pirates attacked Ashourada about 15 years ago, was captured and transported to Russia, where he died.
Sadik	Do.	Cousin of Burjagh.
Beg Jan	Do.	Sons of Khan Jan Beg Kalta, influential men of the Kalta "Charwars."
Kuchak	Do.	
Moosa Khan	Ak.	

Leading Men of the Persian Yamoots—*cont.*

Name.	Taifa or Tirah.	Remarks.
Shah Murdan Kooli Khan.	Arukh -	An influential Aksakal. His mother was a Yoosufzai Afghan.
Ananazar Khan -	Koosali.	
Sikandar - -	Igdar.	
Mirish Bai - -	Karanjik.	
Shah Mungli Khan -	Davaiji -	A leading man of the clans, Davaiji, Daz, and Yelghi.
Killich Kabin Khan -	- -	Chief of the "obahs" of the Kanyukhmaz, Koochak, and Aymir to the vicinity of the Goombazi Kaoos, a noted robber.
Naddir Khan - -	Atta Bai.	
Hashel Khan - -	Do.	
Yooshan - -	Choodah.	
Kousheed Khan -	Kyzil.	
Mohammad Berdi -	Ogurjali.	
Hosein Ombegi - -	Do.	
Mir Syud - -	Do.	
Haji Mohammad Noori -	Do. -	A wealthy Ogurjali, a man of great influence.

Agents of Persia for the Collection of Tribute.

Kasim Khan - -	- -	With the Kanyukhmaz.
Kazim Khan - -	- -	Ditto Davaiji.
Walli Khan - -	- -	Ditto Daz.
Moosa Khan - -	- -	Ditto Yelghi.
Ali Mahommad -	- -	Ditto Ata Bai.
Mahommad Sadik Khan	- -	With the other "obahs" of Jafir Bai "Choomoor" paying tribute to Persia.

Dependent Clans of the Yamoot of the same origin.

Division.	Clan.	Section.	Number of Tents.	Locations.
Ata Bai -	Daz -	- - -	700	Move about the Gurgan and between the two rivers at some distance from the sea. There are also some large "obahs" of the clan near the town of Astrabad at Hoseinabad and Mir-Mohala.
		Panka.		
		Hanka.		
		Doord-Ata-Oogli.		
		Cheensabli.		
	Koochak -	- - -	500	
		Aslanjook.		
		Oostajook.		
		Khurtoom.		
	Kanyukhmaz.	Gooti Kara.		
		- - -	400	Near Nowdeh and the Goklan border.
		Sari-Chakoor.		
		Makhdoom -	- -	In the same locality.
		Koolja.		
	Igdur -	Hulakoo.		
		- - -	300	Near Karawul Tuppa on the Goklan border, about 60 miles east of Astrabad.
		Ak Irkakli.		
		Kara Irkakli.		
		Bidrak -	300	Chiefly Choomoors, settled near Katool, 20 to 30 miles east of Astrabad, 100 tents, cultivate near Astrabad.
Jafir Bai -	Yelghi -	Aymir -	- -	Near Finderisk, 50 miles from Astrabad.
		- - -	- -	Within a few miles of Astrabad, near Soorkhoon Koolla.
		Sikra.		
		Kira.		
		Mirzalee.		
		Vakeelee.		
		Olik.		
		Chirashakh.		
		Ipree.		

Dependent Clans of the Yamoot of the same origin—*cont.*

Division.	Clan.	Section.	Number of Tents.	Locations.
	Davaijee -	- - -	3,300	South of the Gurgan stream, and about Katool, 25 to 30 miles east of Astrabad. One of the most powerful clans of the Yamoot. 300 families are "Choomoors" or cultivators.
		Oodak.		
		Mioot.		
		Ichmab.		
		Abdal.		
		Khivalee.		
		Kirnee.		
		Chobnash.		
		Gurgangee.		
	Karadagh-lee.	Pahlawan.		
		Oozin.		
		Piraan.		
		Yalitlee.		
		Idaklee.		
		Kalmook.		
		Ooroos.		
	Tatar -	- - -	- -	A small tribe scattered about the settlements on the sea, and also to the east of Astrabad.
		Sikarlee.		
		Ak-Kirmishlee.		
		Aghelmishlee.		
	Kojook -	- - -	500	Near Aknow and Babi Sherwan pastures, 40 to 45 miles east of Astrabad.
		Kaka.		
		Khivachi.		
		Karata.		
		Ak Chalee.		
		Kyrik.		
		Dan-Kyrik.		

DIVISIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS, &c., OF THE PERSIAN YAMOOTS.

Divisions.	Sub-divisions.	Sections.	Sub-sections.	Number of Tents.	Locations.
Ata Bai -	Ata Bai -	- - -	- -	500	Near and to the east of the town of Astrabad.
		Sahna.			
		Takki.			
		Yanbai -	- -	- -	Towards the Goklan border.
		Sari Choon.			
		Mahomed Oolook.			
		Tamak.			
		Khanti.			
		Kageti.			
		Kankarma -	- -	200	"Choomoors" living near Astrabad.
		Tanab.			
		Dagoonchi.			
		Kasrkha.			
		Kasa.			
		Ashurgok.			
		Karadashki.			
	Ak -	- - -	- -	2,000	Near Akkala and to the east of the town. Chiefly "Choomoors."
		Oozain Ak.	Sooki.		
			Gook.		
			Habibli.		
		Kiska Ak.	Nur Mohamadli.		
			Kizil Ja.		
			Yoolma -	400	Between the Attrek and Gurgan. 300 tents. Near Asterabad, 100.
			Hirra.		
Jafir Bai -	Yar Ali -	- - -	- -	100	Winter at the mouths of the Gurgan. Move in summer north.
		Arukh -	- -	- -	Gurgan and Band-i-Mohamad Wali Khan (Governor of Astrabad). Chiefly "Choomoors" paying revenue to Persia.
		Kal.			
		Koosali -	- -	100	Chiefly Choomoors, wintering on the Kara Soo, and moving in summer to the Gurgan.
		Kyzil.			
		Sakali -	- -	- -	A small tribe usually counted with Koosali.

Divisions and Distributions, &c., of the Persian Yamoots—*cont.*

Divisions.	Sub-divisions.	Sections.	Sub-sections.	Number of Tents.	Locations.
		Boorkhas.			
		Iri Toomaj -			A powerful section. Located in winter in Kara Sangar, and on the Kara Soo. In summer on the Gurgan. Have a large number of "Choomoors."
		Oonook Toomaj.		1.000	
		Changan -	- -	100	Located in winter in Khoja Nafas and Kara Sangar, and in summer in Goomooshtuppa, Band-i-Mohamad Wali Khan, and on the Gurgan.
	Noor Ali.	Karivangikoor.			
		Pang.			
			Kam -	- -	A small tribe of "Choomoors," chiefly living on the Gurgan.
		Karanjeek -	- -	- -	A considerable tribe usually counted as part of the Katta. Chiefly "Choomoors."
		Karaja -	- -	- -	A small clan living near the sea between the rivers.
		Ogurjali -	- -	1,000	
		Kalta -	- -	1,000	On the Gurgan and Attrek. Chiefly "Choomoors."
		Bahtaka -	- -	600	Between the Attrek and Gurgan 500 tents, 100 near Astrabad. Has many "Choomoors."
		Kalak.			
		Koor - -	- -	1,000	One fursakh from Akkala north of Astrabad, and Goomooshtuppa. Chiefly "Choomoors" paying revenue to Persia.

Settlements of the Akhal Tekkah.

Settlements.	Number of Tents.	Remarks.
Kyzil Arvat - -	100	This "obah" has been twice destroyed by the Russians under Markosoff.
Koojah - - -		
Zarah - - -	-	Small "obahs" lying two or three miles east of Kyzil Arvat.
Chanka - - -		
Kara Sangar - -		
Kyzil Chashma - -		
Bami - - -	- -	Destroyed by the Russians under Markosoff in 1872.
Boorma - - -		
Arachman.		
Souaja.		
Marja.		
Bahrzan.		
Doran - -	- -	At point of debouchement of the pass from Bujnoord, known as the Dahana-i-Otzar (Abzar).
Korghan.		
Ak Tuppa - -	400	
Gombati - -	1,000	In plain some miles from base of mountains.
Karez - - -	- -	A fine pasture not permanently occupied and not cultivated. As many as 4,000 tents all times collected on it.
Miheen.		
Yaralja Baba.		
Yangi Kala - -	- -	Passes from Koochan and Sherwan debouch opposite to this "obah."
Gok Tuppa - -	- -	Some miles from the base of the mountains.
Ak Kala - -	- -	Gok Tuppa is a large "obah" of 700 tents
Akhal or Akhal Ata -	500	of different sections of the Tekke.

Settlements of the Akhal Tekke—*cont.*

Settlements.	Number of Tents	Remarks.
Yamashk.		
Gajar.		
Kurjoo.		
Izkant	-	12 miles out from the base of the mountains.
Bab-i-Arab		
Bazmneen.		
Harrak kala	700	
Mirava	80	
Kibchak	400	
Bagir	400	
Gokcha	400	
Kanshee	1,000	The principal "obahs" of the East. Having fine pastures and a good stream. Being within reach of Deregez, it is the principal point of attack of the Persians.
Ishkabad	200	
Annau.		
Gawars	50	The last "obah" east, bordering on the Deregez. "Atak."

Numbers and Armed Force of the Turkoman Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Persia.

Tribe.	Number of Tents.	Armed Force.		Remarks.
		Horse.	Foot.	
Goklan	25,000 to 30,000	600	-	Number of armed footmen of Goklan not estimated, but comparatively small.
Yamoot	75,000	5,000	-	Number of armed footmen not estimated, but probably not less than the horsemen.
Tekke of Akhal	40,000	4,000	2,000	About 2,000 additional men, it is estimated, could be mounted on an emergency.

No. 10.

Memorandum on the Relations of Russia and Persia with the Turkoman Tribes of the Attrek Frontier.

No. 25, dated Gulahek, 29th June 1875.

From Captain the Hon. G. C. Napier, on Special Duty in Persia, to C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

In continuation of my letter No. 23 of 29th May, I have the honour to submit a copy of a memorandum on the relations of Russia and Persia with the Turkoman tribes of the Attrek Frontier.

Relations of Russia and Persia with the Yamoots and Akhal Tekkah Turkomans on the North-East Frontier of Persia.

Of the past relations of Persia with the Yamoots little is to be learnt on the spot, and probably as little from even the best official sources. Relations of Persia with the Yamoot.

Traditions of past sovereignty.

There is however enough of evidence in broad facts, that are so much matters of popular notoriety as to require no proof, to establish the validity of her claim to have exercised a sovereign authority over at least the southern portion of the tribe for a very long period. Since the time of Nadir Shah, that is during the last 100 years this authority has been very feebly maintained, no attempt has been made to regain by conquest the full allegiance of the tribe, and Persian Governors have been satisfied to accept a very qualified submission and forced to condone the most serious offences. But it is nevertheless beyond dispute that in an intermittent irregular manner the tribe, restricting the term to the southern portion, has performed certain acts incompatible with an assumption of independence. It has, in the first place, furnished at different times bodies of horse for the service of the Persian Sovereign. In the reigns of Futteh Ali Shah and Mahomed Shah, 1,000 Yamoot horse formed part of the enrolled irregular force of the country, nor were these mere mercenaries, their leaders were men of influence and position in the tribe, and the men themselves served at their own cost.

Secondly, a tribute varying in amount has always been required and has been paid, though irregularly.

Thirdly, the chief men of the tribe, or of portions of it, have always held themselves liable to attend the summons of the local Governors of Asterabad.

These various acknowledgments of dependence have been extorted mainly by the necessity that compels a large portion of the tribe to place itself within the limits of the fertile tract dominated by Persia. Had it been possible for the whole body to exist north of the Attrek, there can be little doubt that they would have withdrawn thither and have maintained, as do the Akhal, a belt of fertile country between themselves and Persia, forming a protective barrier, while offering but slight obstruction to their desultory attacks on the Persian border. The exaction of a tribute from them would in that case have been impossible, and a claim of independence might have been fairly made for them.

Traditional influence circumscribed by recent events.

While the border line of Persia has become more secure of late years, and her influence over a portion of the tribe established somewhat more firmly, there have been causes at work to weaken her traditional sovereignty over the whole tribe. The principal of these, the appearance of a new and aggressive power, is external and beyond her control. In the place of being acknowledged as the supreme power she has come to be regarded as a secondary power only, to whom no submission is due save such as is exacted by material force.

The loss of this influence or prestige is injurious to Persia, at least in so far as it deprives her of what may come to be accepted as the test of actual sovereignty, the nominal allegiance or the suffrages of the people. The position of Persia with regard to the Yamoots has been already described. She has a frontier line protected by great natural obstacles, at each end of which, that

is, at Asterábad and Bujnoord, is maintained a force small enough, but still capable of rendering any continued adverse tenure of the Gurgan and Attrek tracts very difficult. Situated on both flanks of the Yamoots, these forces are able to exert an influence exactly measured by the distance and the mobility of the different fractions of the tribe.

Those living at a distance and not tied to the land are entirely unassailable, while those holding lands in the vicinity of either of the forces on the frontier are open to attack, and retain their positions only on sufferance. Thus the "Chomoor" or cultivating classes living near Asterabad and the upper Gurgan are found living as Persian subjects, with only such independence as the freedom of migration can give them, the "Chomoor" living at a greater distance are found less amenable to authority though still holding themselves liegemen of the Shah, and the "Charwars," whether on the tract between the two rivers, or north of the Attrek, are almost wholly independent.

Apart from any influence due to relics of traditional sovereignty the authority of Persia may, therefore, be defined broadly to extend to the cultivated tracts lying on the banks of the Gurgan and Attrek and to all the people cultivating those lands.

Its nature.

The nature of influence or authority thus exercised is difficult to measure or to define, it extends to the imposition of tribute, but leaves the movements of the people entirely free, and does not admit of the punishment of offences by the supreme power. It is submitted to, or resisted, at the caprice of the people or their leading men, and is increased or diminished as the action of the local Governor is firm or weak and vacillating.

The Yamoots falling under assessment of tribute are chiefly of the Atabai branch, the whole of the "Chomoor" of which, with perhaps a few trifling exceptions, contribute. Of the Jafir Bai "Chomoor" a smaller portion pay tribute. The former are represented by various chiefs of their own race, whose names have been mentioned; the latter by Mahomed Sadik Khan, an influential chief, residing in Persian limits and acting in conjunction with Killich Khan, a Yamoot, as principal agent of the Persian Government with the tribe.

The principal sections have also collectors known as "Darogahs," on whom devolves the duty of collecting tribute and arranging for the ransom of prisoners, restitution of property, and other such matters. Through these men the Persian Government maintains its connection with the tribe, ascertains its intentions and disposition, and exercises what influence it has over its movements. That they at least have considerable power was shown lately when they, in accordance with the desire of the Persian Governor, restrained the heads of the sections south of the Attrek from attending the summons of General Lamakyn to attend at his camp, though it was known that he proposed to take the opportunity of distributing presents as a reward for the neutrality of the tribe.

Amount.

The amount of tribute now levied on the tribe is 1,200 tomans

=rupees 4,800. If exacted in full in cash, this would be little more than a nominal tax, but the greatest latitude is allowed in its payment, goods at the valuation of the payers are received in lieu of money, and no regularity is enforced.

Present policy conciliatory.

The policy that at present guides the conduct of the Governor of Asterabad in his dealings with the Yamoots is one of conciliation, and is presumably dictated by his Government.

The payment of tribute is more than ever nominal, raids and petty plunderings in the Persian border villages are left unnoticed or unpunished, and thus, as the villagers complain, are encouraged, and presents and grants of money are freely given to the leading men with the object of securing their good-will.

Unsound if unaccompanied by actual occupation.

The soundness of such policy seems open to much doubt. Its object is to secure the allegiance of the tribe and to prevent their declaring themselves subjects of Russia, but that portion of the tribe that is at all under Persian influence is so by reason of its necessities, from its entire dependence on the productive tracts held by and dominated by Persia. The hold of Persia on it is absolute, and she can therefore expect from mere conciliation no return at all adequate to the losses suffered by a weak policy that lays her own borders open to pillage, and at the same time lavishes ill spared wealth on the plunderers or their kinsmen.

The worst evil that can befall the Yamoots settled south of the Attrek is the loss of their lands; the assumption therefore by Persia of a position that would enable her to threaten them effectively would be the very best curb that could be placed on the plundering propensities of all portions of the tribe, for even those pursuing different vocations are closely connected, and also the best security for their allegiance.

The occupation of the line of the Attrek would at once reduce all the cultivating class to subjection, for their migration is impossible, they can only subsist permanently south of that river, and would settle the question of their allegiance once for all; located behind a line of Persian forts they could not well lay claim to be subjects of any other power than Persia.

A strong position and a firm attitude would also give a value to conciliatory measures that cannot attach to them under present conditions.

Influence of Persia over the Charwars destroyed.

The "Charwars"* being unattached to the soil, and living for the most part at a distance, are almost independent of Persia. They pay no tribute, and though their "Aksakals" visit Asterabad at times, they have ceased to acknowledge her supremacy. This loss of nominal sovereignty is of course to be attributed only to the superior position and policy of Russia.

Persia is unable without extraordinary efforts to advance her troops to the banks of the Attrek, and her weak attitude towards Russia has brought her into contempt with the tribe. On the other hand Russia holds with a firm grasp their summer pastures in the Balkhan, dominates the winter quarters of a large portion

* Described before as being devoted to purely nomadic pursuits.

north of the Attrek, and has not hesitated to pursue refractory sections of the tribe to within a few miles of the walls of Asterabad.

There is nothing, however, in the actual position of Persia with regard to the nomads that necessarily removes them from her grasp. If Russia holds their summer pastures, their winter quarters are to a great extent within her border, that is south of the Attrek, and she has many other advantages arising from ancient connection, similarity of customs, &c. Evils in part remediable.

The assumption of a strong position on the Attrek would complete the subjection of the "Chomoors," and would also largely affect her relations with the nomads. It would make them even more dependent on her good will than on that of Russia. The annual migration to the Balkhan is scarcely an absolute necessity, for there are pastures on the upper Attrek that, it is said, would suffice for a large proportion, and are left unoccupied only through fear of the hostile Tekkah, while the pastures south of the Attrek are indispensable. If the question were to become one of definite and final choice of location and nationality, there can be little doubt that a large proportion of the nomads would throw in their lot with their kinsmen under Persian rule. The question would be to them almost entirely one of material advantage, for their feelings of aversion to Russia and Persia appear about equally balanced, and there can be little doubt that with proper measures for the occupation of the border and a sound internal administration the position of the inhabitants of the southern tract would be far superior to that of the inhabitants of the northern bank of the river and the arid country in its rear.

The trading portion of the Yamoots, the Ogurjali, living for the most part south of the Attrek estuary, devoted to commerce and closely connected by tradition and habit with Persia, appear little disposed to place themselves under the banner of Russia. Their occupation brings them within her influence and into her power, but they still hold to their allegiance and declare themselves subjects of the Shah. The motives of this attachment are said to be fear of the innovations that Russian rule is supposed to bring with it, and a feeling that their position can hardly be improved by a change, for they enjoy almost complete independence and have the advantages of a monopoly of the Turkoman trade. The Ogurjali attached to Persia.

Their connection with Persia is maintained through the Provincial Government of Mazanderan, and not through that of Asterabad as might be expected. They govern themselves in all matters internal, but are guided in their dealings with the Russians by the Persian authorities. The Governor of Ashraf, the nearest district of Mazanderan, is charged with their immediate control, and levies a tax on their boats, the only revenue derived from them by Persia.

The amount of this tax is now fixed at nine and a half tomans per boat, with a reduced rate on the salt trade with Chalaken. The collection is farmed to one of the leading men of the Afghan colony at Karatappa.

The Ogurjally of Cheleken are of course entirely lost to Persia, but those of Hassan Kooli though located on the north shore of the estuary have evinced an inclination to withdraw to the Persian side, the only obstacle that prevented their doing so being declared to be the want of a suitable site for their camp. In winter the whole coast is open to them, but in summer the few spots affording the necessary freedom from malaria, and good water are occupied. Though not restrained, many inducements are held out to them by the Russian authorities, and it is probable that they will remain, for their application does not appear after a lapse of a year to have gone beyond the Provincial Government of Mazanderan.

Relations of Russia with the Yamoot.

The Yamoots appear to have first come into serious contact with Russia on the occupation by that power of the island of Ashurada 26 years ago. Their piratical incursions into Persia were then for the first time effectively checked, and their settlements on the coast were on several occasions attacked and destroyed. About 10 years later the first lodgments on the mainland were made. The occupation of Krasnovodsk, and subsequently of Chekishlar, committed Russia irrevocably to a course of interference and aggression.

Chekishlar after being twice occupied has been abandoned, but Krasnovodsk has attained a permanent character and forms the head-quarters whence Russian influence is disseminated and her connection with the nomads maintained and extended.

From the time of the first settlement on the coast to the date of the Khivan campaign, the Yamoots appear to have been regarded and were treated by the Russians as enemies whose subjugation was a necessity, a task to be undertaken as soon as practicable. They were several times attacked both from Krasnovodsk and on the Attrek, and punished by the plunder of their "obahs," and by fine. One of their leading "Aksakals" who was prominently hostile was captured, and died in exile in Siberia.

Change of policy at time of Khivan campaign.

The necessities of that campaign, together probably with a better knowledge of the character of the nomads, would seem to have wrought a change in the views of the Russian border authorities, and the Yamoots on their part learnt to respect the power of Russia.

As a consequence in all Russian operations since 1869, or from about 10 years subsequent to the first settlement at Krasnovodsk, the Yamoots are found either sullenly neutral or giving active assistance to Russian forces.

The march of Markozoff from Krasnovodsk to Chekishlar was entirely unopposed, and his carriage was provided by Yamoot "Charwars." His expedition from the head of the Balkhan Bay to Kyzil Arvat, which was directed against the Tekkah "obahs," was accompanied by many of the tribesmen and assisted by them in the matter of carriage and supplies. During the operations against Khiva the Yamoots refrained from hostility, but their assistance was more reluctantly given. Camels for transport of baggage had in many cases to be taken from them by force, and

both the Chekishlar and Kinderli columns appear to have been hampered by desertion of camel drivers.

Since the conclusion of the campaign the policy of conciliation appears to have been adopted finally, and Russia now plays the *rôle* of protector of the Yamoots against their Tekkeh enemies in much the same manner as on her first appearance on the coast she claimed to act as guardian of the Persians from the Yamoot pirates. Russian protection extended to Yamoots.

The latest military operation of the Russians on the Caspian, the descent of Lamakin's force on Chekishlar, and its march up the coast, was determined on ostensibly in consequence of the raid of the Tekkah on the Karanjik Yamoot "obahs." Retaliatory expedition.

General Lamakin's force moved to Beiat Haji, 50 miles from Chekishlar, not only without opposition, but with the aid of the Yamoots who attended his camp and took the opportunity of referring to him a dispute regarding some canals of the Attrek that should have been referred to the Persian Governor of Astrabad.

General Lamakin, the officer who appears to have inaugurated the present policy, is said to have much personal influence and to be far superior in tact and capacity for dealing with the intractable nomads, to Colonel Markozoff, whose intercourse with the Yamoots was marked by much severity. "Where Markozoff "threatened and used force," say the Turkomans, "Lamakin "calls round him the chief men of the tribe and opening their "hearts by a liberal display of hospitality, together with more "valued proofs of his good will and earnests of his generous "intentions for the future, explains to them his wishes and "exhorts them as allies and friends of Russia to aid him." General Lamakin.

With a good military reputation and a sufficient force maintained at Krasnovodsk, the method adopted by the latter is no doubt best calculated to ensure the good-will of the tribe for the present and its future subjection.

Regarding the actual extent to which the Yamoots have already fallen under Russian influence, it is difficult to obtain exact information. The number professing Russian allegiance fluctuates constantly, as the sections of the tribe move beyond the reach of Russian garrisons, become dissatisfied with their treatment, or are influenced by the Turkoman Agents of Persia. Extent of Russian influence with tribe.

The whole of the "Charwars" are regarded, on the Persian border, as under the influence of Russia, and in fact Russian subjects, but such an assumption would be too sweeping. The clans migrating each year to the Balkhan necessarily come into communication with the Russian authorities, and are dependent on their good will to some extent, but even these, if met with in winter south of the Attrek, would deny that they were subjects of Russia. The remaining clans of the "Charwars" hold themselves, as yet, entirely independent of Russia as well as of Persia.

The lately proclaimed constitution of the Trans-Caspian

provinces appears, in fact, to have been premature and illusory as regards the Turkoman subjects supposed to have been thus formally brought within the line of Russian dominion.

The new district of Krasnovodsk counts only the settlements on the Balkhan Bay and on Chalaken, inhabited the latter by a few Ogurjally Yamoots, the former by a very small heterogeneous population dependent on the Russian garrison. The "Chomoors," even those in the vicinity of Krasnovodsk, pay no tribute and enjoy complete freedom of movement. They appear to be subjected merely to a constant solicitation, the gentle pressure of which they are free to escape at will. As might be expected, such treatment backed by the immense "prestige" of Russia and by a real display of power is not without effect. The Russian governor, though counting few subjects, could without doubt command much of the resources of the tribe for supply of both grain and carriage. The sections of the Yamoots whose "Charwars" or nomads are said to be most under the influence of Russia, and are accounted by the ill-informed on the Persian border as her subjects, are the—

Arookh,	Kyzil,	Kam,	Koor,
Koosali,	Eeri Toomaj,	Chooda,	Daz,
Sakali,	Karamjik,	Kalta,	Davaiji

of the Jafir Bai branch. These sections have all at different times aided the Russians, and their "Aksakals" have attended at Cheleken and Krasnovodsk, and have received presents and payments for the services they have rendered. Connection with them is maintained through 34 "Aksakals" in the pay of Russia and under the orders of the Commodore of the Squadron at Ashurada. The pay of these "Aksakals" is fixed at 20 tomans = rupees 80 per annum, and they receive presents yearly to the value of about rupees 20. They live with their tribes, but are expected to attend when summoned, and to aid in the collection of supplies and carriage when required.

In the same manner at Krasnovodsk 15 "Aksakals" of the "Chomoors" are employed and paid by General Lamakin. Sixty mounted men of the sections Daz and Davaiji are also entertained permanently, and form with 50 Cossacks the only cavalry force at Krasnovodsk.

Besides these 60 men there are, or were up to a late date, no Turkomans in the Government of Krasnovodsk who could be fairly accounted Russian subjects.

It will be seen thus that, though the Russians have but few Yamoot subjects, they have a firm hold on the nomads north of the Attrek and considerable influence over the cultivating and trading classes, an influence that, in default of vigorous action on the part of Persia, may increase to such an extent as to carry with it the suffrages of the mass of the people, and thus afford Russia a fair basis for a claim to the sovereignty of the tracts occupied by the tribe.

Some mention has already been made of the relations of the Akhal Tekkah with Persia in connection with the border chiefships of Boojnoord, Koochan, and Deregez. Relations of Persia with the Akhal.

Protected on one flank by the Yamoots, and in front by a mountainous country held by feudal chiefs, whose loyalty has at all times been wholly subjected to motives of self-interest, they have not only maintained a complete independence, but rendered a large tract of the Persian highlands, an inhabited waste, serving as an efficient screen to their own movements and a very serious barrier to any attack on their settlements.

The peculiar relations that have subsisted between them and the feudal chiefs on one side, and between the feudal chiefs and Persia on the other, while aiding the maintenance of their independence, have produced a connection that may be of the greatest advantage to that power in the event of her assaying the task of bringing them by conciliatory measures under her banner; while frequently at feud the chiefs are constantly in close communication with the tribes, and have sufficient influence in their councils to form an invaluable connecting link. Influence of the border chiefs capable of being turned to good account.

Hitherto they have held their position of powerful feudatories by exaggerating their power and the difficulties of coercing the tribe, and preventing any attempts at friendly communication on the part of Persia, but they might under sufficient pressure be induced to direct their efforts towards a better object.

It needs only to demonstrate to them by arguments, the force of which could not be misapprehended, that their interests lay therein, to induce them to strive at promoting peaceful relations where they have hitherto sown dissension.

There would be difficulties no doubt in persuading them that a new order of things must supersede the old, but there is already a dawning of a perception of the truth—a feeling pretty generally evinced—that the old game is played out, and that the plunderers who have ceased to plunder and are trembling before a new power, cannot much longer be held up before the rulers of the country as intractable enemies whose inveteracy renders any but harsher measures impossible.

Two of the principal chiefs, the "Eelkhanee" of Bujnoord and the Khan of Deregez, admitted expressly that they believed the tribe on their border to be no longer dangerous as enemies, and that the time for measures calculated to win their allegiance and friendship had arrived. They were both of opinion that friendly overtures, if sanctioned by a show of sufficient force, would meet with a response, and each declared himself willing to accept the responsibility of the negotiation. Strong measures would no doubt be needed to suppress local jealousies and local prejudices, but the result would be scarcely doubtful, and there is no alternative that does not present prospects of serious danger to the position of Persia on the border, and, as an ultimate consequence, to the integrity of the kingdom.

Bounded on the north by a barrier of impassable deserts and owning a numerous and warlike border population, her position

would be secure, but hemmed in by a strip of territory held by an aggressive foreign power, she would be subject to all the dangers that such a contact must produce.

Save through the border chiefs, the Persian Government has no relations or connection with the Akhal, and it is therefore only by destroying their power or forcing them to adopt a policy favourable to a real extension of her influence that she can hope to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, in which their character and their mode of life involve her.

Relations of Russia with the Akhal. Hostilities.

The position of the Akhal on the flank of Yamoots and their connection with the Khanate of Khiva has brought them already into hostile collision with Russia.

The Yamoot "Charwars," their traditional enemies, claim the protection of Russia when it suits their purpose to do so, and the Akhal, on the other hand, feeling secure behind the expanse of desert separating them from Krasnovodsk, were careless of provoking hostility. The Russians have in consequence been twice forced to visit the Akhal "Atak," in the first instance in retaliation of injuries inflicted on the Yamoots claiming the protection of Russia.

A column under Colonel Markozoff in 1870 reached the fort of Kyzil Arvat and destroyed it. The Akhal on this occasion first experienced the power of European arms and discipline. The Russian infantry numbering only a few hundreds was able, marching in long open lines, to drive the whole mounted force of the tribe before it, shooting down the ill-armed horsemen with absolute impunity. In their former encounter with disciplined troops, the Persian troops at Merve, they had been able to break through solid masses of infantry and to massacre and capture them in hundreds. The difference was sufficiently marked to impress them thoroughly, and they admit that against such infantry as they met at Kyzil Arvat they have not a chance of successful resistance.

In the autumn of 1872 Colonel Markozoff pushed forward with a pioneer column, aided by the Yamoot, as far as Orta Kuy, in the desert on the road to Khiva. There he was attacked by the Akhal who succeeded in depriving him of a large portion of his baggage train, and reduced the whole force to the greatest straits. Having extricated himself with difficulty, Markozoff on his return march moved south as far as Kyzil Arvat, and again destroyed that fort and the settlements of Bami Burma, Kyzil Chashma and several others. Little or no opposition was on this occasion offered.

In the spring following the Kinderli Khivan column was harassed by a large body of the Akhal, who, however, were again roughly handled and fled with a loss of about 100 men. The Akhal were led by an Aksakal, Sofi Khan, of Kyzil Arvat, and they allege that they acted under the orders of the Khan of Khiva, but it is more probable that a hope of retaliation for the injuries inflicted on them by Markozoff was the real motive.

Friendly communication opened.

After this check the Akhal did not again venture on hostilities, and, at the close of the campaign, friendly communication was opened

on both sides. Sofi Khan, the leader above-mentioned, was the first to attend a friendly summons sent to the Akhal "Aksakals" from Krasnovodsk. He presented himself there with three others early last year. The Russian Governor Lamakin received them as a deputation, and was liberal with presents and promises. The three "Aksakals" who accompanied Sofi Khan returned without delay, and informed the tribe that the Russian General offered them peace on terms of submission to his authority. No response was made to this, and it is denied that Sofi Khan and his companions in any way represented the tribe or were authorized to treat with the Russians. They were impelled, it was alleged, merely by hopes of personal gain.

Allegiance of tribe demanded.

It seems probable, however, that the tribe was willing to treat, for it was not till the safe return of the "Aksakals," and yet within a few days of their return that the raid was made on the Yamoot "obahs" on the Balkhan.

This raid being the latest act of provocation perpetrated by the Akhal is a matter of some importance. A party of the tribe crossed the 130 miles of desert intervening between them and the Balkhan pastures, and attacked a camp of the Karanjik section of the Yamoots, carrying off a number of prisoners, chiefly women and children, a circumstance in itself unusual, for the Turkomans in their intertribal warfare usually respect the families of the vanquished. The attack was regarded by the Russian authorities as an open declaration of hostility and a defiance. On their return march the raiders were overtaken by an Agent of Lamakin with a demand for the immediate release of the prisoners, which was not complied with.

Raid on Yamoot.

The Akhal declare that the raid was justified by the previous raids of the Yamoot, and was a matter between the two tribes and in no way affecting the Russians, who moreover had no right to protect the Yamoots unless they also prevented them from raiding. They may have right on their side, but it is doubtful whether any restraint put upon the Yamoots would stay the active feud between the two tribes.

The late demonstration of the Russians on the Attrek before referred to was made ostensibly in consequence of this affair to procure the release of the prisoners. Their release has since been reported from Russian sources, but up to a late previous date it had not been effected.

It would appear, therefore, that in spite of the presence of an Akhal deputation at Krasnovodsk their attitude towards the Russians, as represented there, is hostile and defiant, and that consequently provocation to further advances in their direction will not be wanting. The members of the tribe whom I met declared in fact that they lived in anticipation of invasion, and that their counsels were only divided as to the course they should pursue. One party was for a retirement *en masse* to Merve, another apparently looked vaguely for an asylum in Afghanistan.

Attitude of tribe still hostile.

Submission to either Russia or Persia was not admitted possible, but looking at the isolated position of the tribe and the fact that

they have for more than 100 years been attached, to the fertile tract they occupy, it seems possible that either of these alternatives would present attractions and be recommended by arguments that might influence the decision of a majority of the tribe.

Communication opened from Khiva.

About the same time that communication was opened with the tribe from Krasnovodsk, that is at the close of the Khivan campaign, the Akhal settlements were visited by Khivan agents sent by the Khan under the direction, it is said, of Colonel Ivanoff. These agents, three in number, were Khivans, one of them in the service of Russia; their object was to open friendly intercourse on condition that the tribe resumed its allegiance to the Khan, and they required as a pledge of agreement on the part of the tribe that the caravan route from Khiva to Karez in the "Atak" should be opened to trade.

My informants admitted that the agents had been well received, and that in consideration of the advantages that they themselves would derive they had agreed to the opening of the route.

As regards their allegiance to the Khan, they had evidently not denied themselves any advantage that might be gained by promises, but they deemed his submission to the "infidels" had deprived him of all claim on them.

According to latest accounts the Karez route has not yet been opened, but there can be no doubt that in it the rulers of Khiva have a lure for the tribe and a pretext for interference with them that they will not fail to take advantage of.

The Russian authorities on the Oxus and Caspian may possibly have no design on a tract so entirely secluded and cut off by deserts from their present frontiers; but it is worthy of note that the one of their first acts as representing the suzerain of the Khan of Khiva was to direct his reassumption of the allegiance he claims from the Akhal.

Summary.

The positions in which Russia and Persia are now found on the south-east coast of the Caspian and the Attrek, and the relations in which they stand to the two tribes, the Yamoots and the Akhal Tekkah inhabiting the steppe, may be defined with tolerable exactness, briefly as follows:—

Persia holds the line of the Attrek from its source to about the 57th degree of longitude indisputably. Thence she holds the line of the Gurgan, partly by occupation, partly through the medium of tributary tribes, and she has constructive possession of the tract beyond by reason of the submission, partial and imperfect though it always has been, of the tribe inhabiting it, to her authority.

She receives a nominal tribute from a portion of the tribe cultivating lands south of the Attrek, but her actual power over the tribe extends only as far as the lands they hold and cultivate.

The present policy is one of weak conciliation that can tend to no good end, for so long as she falls short of actual possession of the Attrek border and has, as a consequence, but an imperfect and fluctuating hold on the allegiance of the tribesmen, so long will it remain open to them to declare themselves subjects of Russia.

A firm occupation of the fertile tracts still within her reach is one of the measures necessary to secure the position of Persia on her north-eastern border.

With the Akhal Tekkah Persia has no relations save through the border chieftains, she is regarded as an enemy less dangerous, because less powerful, than Russia; but she has in the influence of those chiefs an instrument that may be turned to good account. The incorporation of the tribe with the border-states by peaceful means is indispensable to the safety of Persia.

The actual position of Russia is but a slight index of the extent of her influence, and the means employed apparently incommensurate with the success already attained.

She has but a single permanent settlement on the Yamoot coast, the fort of Krasnovodsk, and a single naval station, the island of Ashurada, 240 miles to the south. Between these points there is neither garrison, harbour, nor safe anchorage.

The habitable space of ground at the latter place is too confined to admit of its being made available as a base or depôt for the supply or equipment of any but the smallest force.

The Krasnovodsk settlement is badly situated as regards water and supplies, but it is within easy reach of a tract described as suitable for permanent occupation.

Beyond it, however, extends an arid desert, the least width of which is 130 to 150 miles.

The whole east coast of the Caspian has been formally constituted a Russian province, its eastern limits being left undefined; but the arrangement appears, save as regards the northern coast, a nominal one. In spite of an apparently weak position, a large number of the Yamoots are virtually Russian subjects, looking to her for protection against Persia and for aid in their feuds with the Tekkah. The numbers actually enlisted in her service serve only as an indication of the position she might occupy, if her policy were not rather to foster than to force its consolidation. The Akhal Tekkah afford at present a convenient justification of Russian progress eastward, and their relations with her have been up to a late date marked by extreme hostility, but there are not wanting indications that a change is working. It is conceivable that Russia will appear before very long as the protector of the Akhal against the encroachments of Persia.

(Signed) G. C. NAPIER, Capt.,
On Special Duty in Persia.

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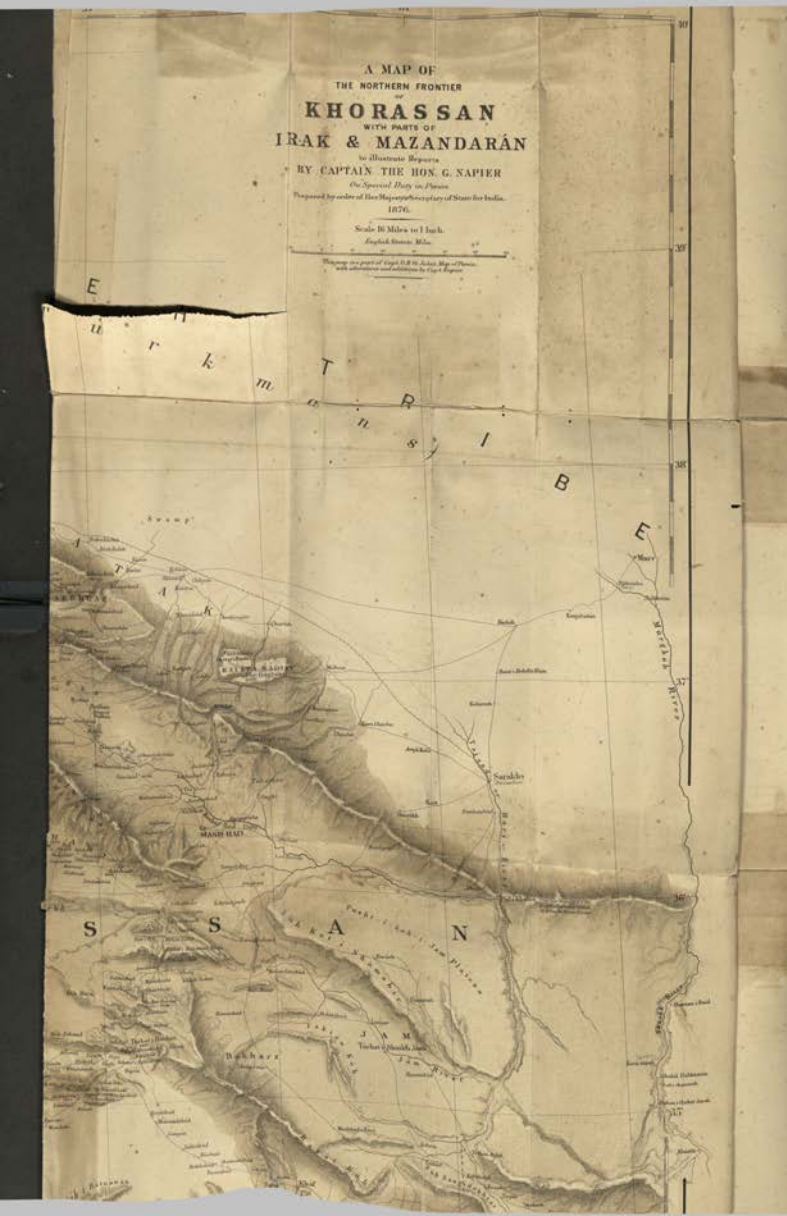
A MAP OF
THE NORTHERN FRONTIER
OF
KHORASSAN
WITH PARTS OF
IRAK & MAZANDARÁN
to illustrate Reports
BY CAPTAIN THE HON. G. NAPIER
On Special Duty in Persia
Prepared by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.
1876.
Scale 16 Miles to 1 Inch.
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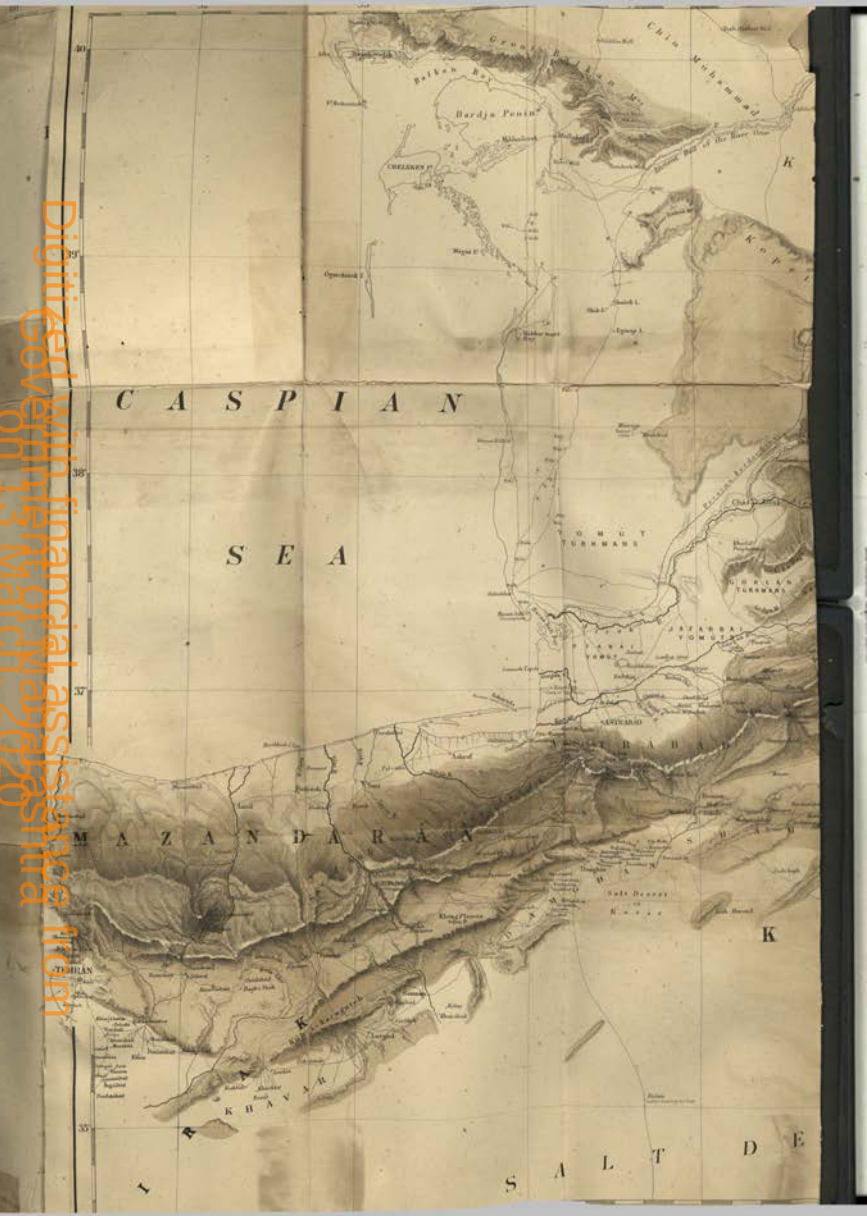
Turkmans
Swamp
Sarakhs
MASHHAD
Bushaxx
Khaf
Nishapur
Meshed
Kuchan
Bujnurd
Shirvan
Kelat
Kalpush
Kalat Nadir
Kelat Nadir
Jam River
Tejend River
Heri Rud
Murghab River
Band-i-Bala
Band-i-Pain
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Plateau
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Mountains
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Pass
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Valley
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Stream
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Ridge
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Peak
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Hill
Band-i-Kuh-i-Sam Plain

Chin Muhammad
KARA KUM DESERT
TEK
Kopet Dagh
Kuril Nevat
Horse Plateau
YOMUT TURKMANS
GOKLAN TURKMANS
JAFARBAI YOMUT
Jahj
Jagatai - Jawaia Plain
Salt Desert or Kavir
KHORA
ALT DESERT


CASPIAN
SEA
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Bardja Penin.
Chin Mohammad
Kopeh
TOMUT TURKMANS
GOKLAN TURKMANS
JAFARBAI YOMUTS
ASTERABAD
MAZANDARAN
TEHRAN
KHANAT
SALT DESERT
Salt Desert
Kavir
Opuchaldi B.
Egamy I.
Chaldi I.
Ogurchinski I.
Mayak P.
Cheleken P.
Kara Bogaz Gol
Gulf of the Desert
Khalkhala
Kalkhoran
Kalkhoran
Khalkhoran
Khalkhoran
Kh